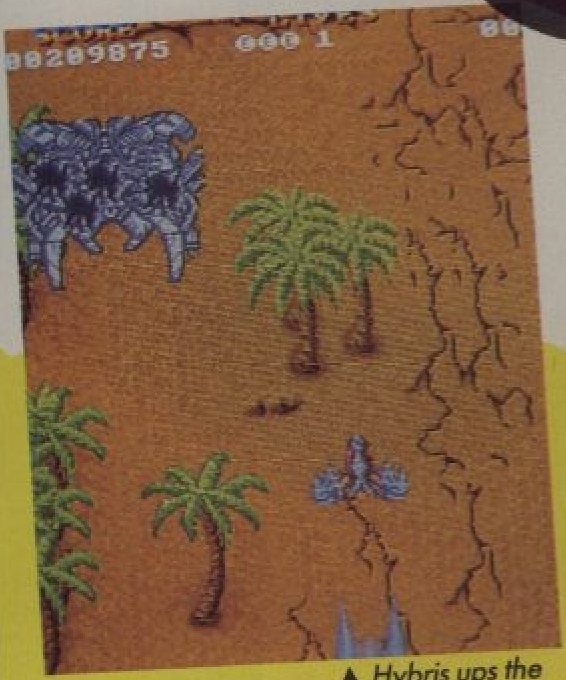

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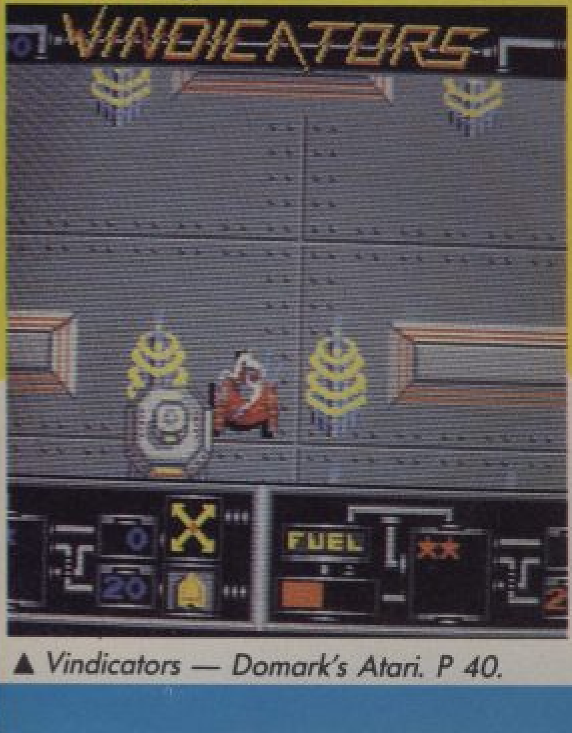
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▲ Populous. Is it a miracle? P30

▼ Weird Dreams — sweet dreams or nightmares? P 18





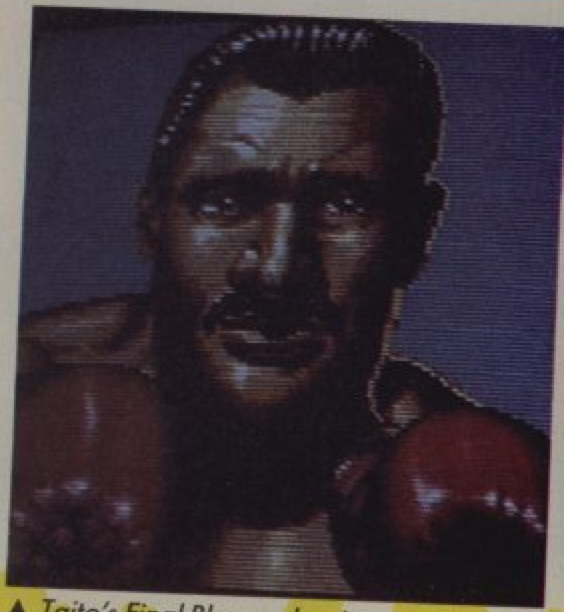
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FRONT COVER
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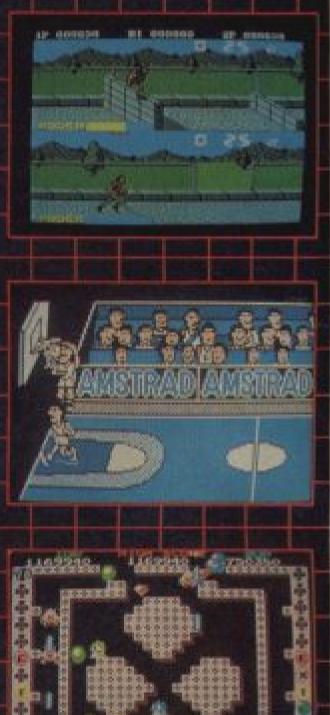
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"Stunningly colourful screens ... the most accurate conversion of an arcade hit in years." – Your Sinclair

PLATOON
"Platoon is absolutely superb – a milestone in film tie-ins, and a yardstick by which all others shall be judged." – Zapp 64

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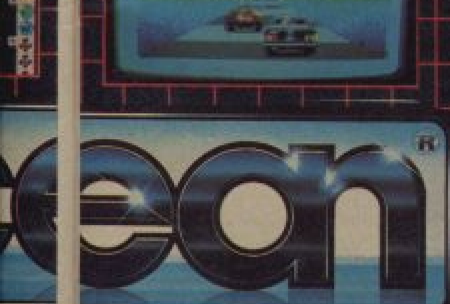
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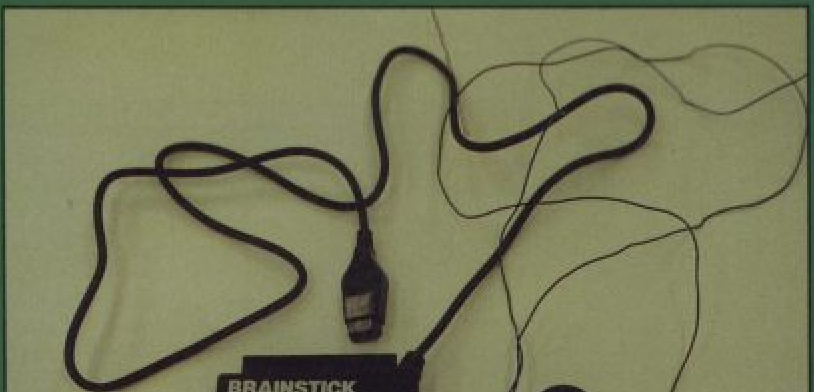
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Logo a Go-Go

Progressive, go-ahead company that they are, Domark are soon to be using a new logo, because they thought the old 'DM' thing was beginning to look a bit naff. Why are we telling you this? Well, because they want you, the imaginative C+VG readers, to design it for them! Cor! Domark supremos, Dominic Wheatley and Mark Strachan will be judging the competition, and will reward whoever has the best idea (artistic skill is not essential) with a prize of £100! Cor again! So, what are you waiting for? Put your idea down on a piece of paper, fold it carefully and bung it in an envelope with the following writing on it: Domark Logo Compo, C+VG, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU.

Look no Hands



Ever seen the film based on Craig Thomas' novel "Firefox", in which Clint Eastwood pilots a plane which takes its control cues by, literally, reading his mind? The faster and more accurate control response offered by this kind of Cerebral Interfacing System has long been the subject of intensive research by NASA and the USAF who want to give their pilots the edge in combat situations, but the fruits of their experiments have been used by Home Cyberlabs, a British company based in the Isle of Wight, to produce a stripped-down CIS which takes the form of an ersatz home computer joystick.

The Brainstick, as it's called, scans your brain's alpha wave output through a pair of electrodes attached to your temples. The signals are then passed to a decoding unit which translates your thoughts into eight-directional control and firing information. But wouldn't such a system demand intense levels of concentration from the player? Not according to Joseph King, Home Cyberlabs' MD. "We have designed and patented our own proprietary circuitry, containing a revolutionary control algorithm and state-of-the-art wave filters to maintain total accuracy at all times. Our research has shown that the Brainstick requires slightly less mental effort than using a standard joystick, because of course the control process is more direct."

The main obstacle to Brainstick's success was the wide variation in alpha patterns from person to person, but this was overcome by building a ten second startup sequence into the hardware, which calibrates the decoding circuit to the individual's physiology then stores the settings in a battery-backed RAM chip. After this, it's just a case of plugging into a standard nine-pin 'D'-type joystick port and loading your favourite game.

Our picture shows the prototype sent to C+VG for evaluation. The Brainstick provided a remarkable level of control on road-racing games such as WEC Le Mans, and worked very well with a variety of shoot 'em ups, including Thunderblade and Operation Wolf. However, the device wasn't as easy to use on IK+, because such a wide range of moves were difficult to visualise. Similarly, the rapid left-right movements required by Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge proved very difficult to reproduce mentally without bringing on a mild headache.

Joseph is keen to bring this revolution in games to the British market, and reckons that, with the production process he has devised, the units could be knocked out at around £30 each.
However, he is reluctant to undertake the initial expense of marketing such an innovative product in a notoriously volatile market and is currently seeking an interested party who could handle a potentially lucrative deal like this. Any offers?

Compo C

Ok — you can put that phone down now — the WordyBlade Compo from our January issue has finally been drawn. US Gold put up a terrific ThunderBlade coin-op for the person who could get the most words out of the letters in "Thunderblade" and that person was (cue fanfare/party poppers/svelte blondes handing out complimentary balloons) Stephen Lodge of Horbury in West Yorkshire. Stephen came up with no less than 2,124 words, all of which were checked and counted by the C+VG dictionary squad (so no ringing us up and saying you don't believe it, OK?)

Incidentally, this particular compo was



Who You Gonna Call

We don't know who you're gonna call, but we know Activision are currently on the 'phone to the Real Ghosts (fact that who are starring in their springtime release of the same name". Mr. Micro are programming the conversion of the Data East coin-op (a game which, incidentally, never made it to UK arcades) which puts you on haunted city streets with only a positron collider to protect you. That should whet your appetite for the review which is coming at you next ish. Also pictured here is F14 Tomcat, Activision's flight sim, which, even though it's only going to be available on C64 disk, is going for plenty of realism, with flight training, 80 randomly selected missions and five theatres of war to play in. How nice.



Is That a Joystick or What?

Yes. We've looked long and hard at this picture, and it's undoubtedly a joystick. In fact, it's a new joystick going under the really exciting name of the Quick Joy Supercharger which features such wonderful accoutrements as full microswitch operation, two fire buttons, table suction cups, an auto-fire switch and (bit of a unusual one, this) an Amstrad selection switch which allows you to use the auto-fire on a CPC machine.

The price for such a cuddly controller? Only twelve of your English pounds (and 95 pennies), and it's available from all reputable dealers (and no doubt a few unreputable ones, we're not that sure).



Congrats

one of the most popular in living memory, and the C+VG Post Carrying Operative was literally staggered when each new day brought another huge sack of entries for him to deliver to our penthouse office. Equally amazed was ace envelope-opener, Paul "Moosehead" Glancey who, as our photograph shows, was letting his work get on top of him for once.

Another coin-op, this time a flipping brilliant R-Type machine was also claimed this month by a certain Sinh Huynh of North Peckham in London. He was the winner of Activision's R-Type Master Blaster Compo in our November and December issues, in case you were wondering . . .

And finally, those lovely folks at Ocean will be sending a Tamiya model tank to the following fortunates who won the Op Wolf Compo in our December ish: K Leese of Stoke on Trent, Neil Richardson of Nottingham, Philip Martindale of Newton-le-Willows, Chuen Ming Yuen of Rotterdam, Greg Brown of Hull, Daniel Rose of Cobham, Jody-C-Gorton of Kilmacolm, Christopher Thompson of Portsmouth, Graham Hadfield of Hayward's Heath and N Illingworth of Norton Malton, Congratulations one and all!

Images at Work

Heckymick! Have Imageworks got some interesting games coming up, or what? Um, well, yes they have actually, as you should be able to see from the screenshots.

The game with a screenful of bones is the latest C64 shoot 'em up from Tony Crowther and David Bishop, called Phobia. It's a horizontally-scrolling one or two player affair with fifteen levels of psychotic nasties to blast your way through. Phobia also contains the first usage of a new hardware bug which crams 32 colours on a 64 screen — 16 more than the machine is supposed to be capable of! This feature should make it nigh on indistinguishable from the Amiga and ST versions which are going to be released at the same time.

Crime Town Depths is another shoot 'em up, this one boasting rather good graphics — in fact, Image Works are going so far as to call them "State of the Art", and how many trillions of times have we heard that before?

Palladin is a 16-bit fantasy trek across a tortured land to a wizard's tower, during which you must acquire magical powers from other sorcerors and fight off forest denizens.

Later in the year Imageworks will launch a Super Mario Brothers-style platform game called DDT, the Amiga version of which runs in HAM mode (4096 colours!), and the new Bitmap Brothers blaster which you may have glimpsed on Channel 4's Signals programme. Mr Rignall has seen both games and describes them as "astounding".



Fax

Cok Tells...

Currently crossing the Channel are three bijou programettes from French software *maison*, Coktel Vision. Dakar '89 is a road racing game based on the famous across-desert rally. As you can see from our screenshot, the race is viewed from an unusual angle so it'll be interesting to see how the game plays.

The legend of Djel is a fantasy adventure set in four ailing kingdoms. Save each one by tracking down four quest items and you win. Djel features some rather nice graphics and lots of subgames to keep even the most hyperactive knight happy.

Finally, there's European Space Shuttle which simulates the ESA's space shuttle Hermes and sends the player on one of four missions.

All three should be on the streets by March on ST and Amiga formats.



Nightmare on Northumberland Street

Geordie software supremos, Tynesoft, have launched Horrorsoft, a new label which they claim caters for a massive untapped market in horror computer games. The first game on the new label, to be launched at the end of March is an ST/Amiga/PC/C64 product called Personal Nightmares which was written by the team of programmers who produced Heroes of the Lance for SSI. Like Heroes of the Lance it will be an arcade adventure with a definite bias on the adventure. The programmers consider size to be important and the ST version has four disks of rooms to explore and puzzles to solve.

This "good clean horror" as Tynesoft call it is to be publicised by no less a personality than vampish vixen Elvira, who is also to be the subject of Horrorsoft's second game.

So now all you sickos are no doubt wondering how horrific these games are going to be. Well, don't expect heaps of writhing gore, because the Horrorsoft team are going more for the traditional Hammer horror style plots which place the onus on supernatural goings-on rather than ritual dismemberments and venom-vomiting characters.

Meanwhile, on Tynesoft's main label we should soon be seeing the seven events of Rodeo Games, then there's Mayday Squad and First Person Pinball. Mayday Squad casts you as a commando who gets up to all sorts of SAS heroics, rescuing hostages from terrorists, and that sort of thing . . . First Person Pinball promises to be an unusual addition to the genre insofar as YOU are the ball and you view the pin table with all its flippers, bumpers and drop targets in glorious 3D. The mind boggles . . .



Orient Expressions



The latest Cinemaware game is soon to be upon us — it's called Lords of the Rising Sun and is set in (surprise, surprise) twelfth century Japan. LOTRS plays in a similar style to Defender of the Crown insofar as it's mainly a strategy wargame, in which you command armies of Samurai, negotiate alliances and take part in one-to-one combat with the enemies of your clan. Cinemaware are promising plenty of superb graphics and stunning presentation, even down to waves breaking against the seashore on the map of Japan! As usual, Mirrorsoft will be releasing the game in the UK, with the Amiga version coming first at £29.99, followed by C64, PC and ST versions.

Later in the year, Mirrorsoft will be releasing two other Cinemaware games, the first of which will be It Came from the Desert, which is based on the classic '50's monster movie, THEM! (you must have seen it — the one with the giant ants). That should be around in July or August, and it'll be followed by TV Sports Basketball.

Charts

ATARI ST TOP TEN

1	Operation Wolf – Ocean.
2	Thunder Blade – US Gold.
3	Lombard RAC Rally.
4	Elite – Firebird.
5	Battle Chess – Elec. Arts.
6	Speed Ball – Mirrorsoft.
7	Pacmania – Grand Slam.
8	Falcon – ST.
9	TV Sports Football.
10	Sword of Sodan – Discovery.

Op Wolf takes the number one slot. Falcon should soar higher next month as it has only just gone on sale for the Amiga and therefore only enters the chart at number 8.

AMSTRAD TOP TEN

1	Operation Wolf – Ocean.
2	Thunder Blade – US Gold.
3	Robocop – Ocean.
4	Bomb Jack – Encore.
5	Yabba Dabba Doo – Bugbyte.
6	Yogi Bear – Alternative.
7	Ad. P'ball Simulator – C. Masters.
8	Big Foot – Code Masters.
9	Super Stuntman – Code Masters.
10	Air Wolf – Encore.

Heavy on the budget. Thats the Amstrad Top Ten – with only Op Wolf, Thunder Blade, and Robocop making it into the top ten from the full price ranks. What does it all mean?

ATARI ST/TOP TEN

1	Falcon – Mirrorsoft.
2	Thunderblade – US Gold.
3	Operation Wolf – Ocean.
4	Lombard RAC Rally – Mandarin.
5	After Burner – Activision.
6	R-Type – Electric Dreams.
7	Elite – Firebird.
8	Batman – Ocean.
9	Speed Ball – Mirrorsoft.
10	Joan of Arc – US Gold.

Falcon dominates the ST chart. Interesting to see to coin-op conversions though – perhaps ST owners aren't like the sim mad gamesters they have been painted. Truth is they like a good shot 'em up just like the rest of us.

Fax

Hewson Good News, Son



For those of you drumming your fingers, waiting for the arrival of Hewson's Cybernoid II on the Amiga and ST, the word is that they'll be in the shops in April. The 16-bit versions will feature extra levels and weapons, and for added grossness, animated wormy landscapes. Groo! Feast yer eyes on the screenshot and believe.

Also on the road from Abingdon is the arcade adventure Stormlord on the C64, which features graphics by Hugh Binns, sound by Maniacs of Noise and programming by C64 Cybernoid hacker, Nick Jones. Can't wait? This piccy should whet your appetite for the review next ish.



Odd Balls



Cor, this 3D business — dunnit get everywhere? After producing such 3D greats as Stargliders 1 and 2, Carrier Command and Elite, Telecomsoft have applied their perspecto-visionaries to (of all things) a Pool game starring the current European Pool Champ, "Maltese" Joe Barbara. What d'you mean, "Who?"

As well as being able to play against Joe or one of his four mates, you can take part in a two player head to head game, or just practise trick shots if the fancy takes you. And of course, the 3D element means you can view the shot from any angle.

A F.I.S.T.-Full of Fun

Steve Jackson presents F.I.S.T. Fantasy Interactive Scenarios by Telephone

A new dimension in fantasy gaming!

Fighting Fantasy fans who ran up their parents' 'phone bill by playing Steve Jackson's telephone FF game, FIST, can now delve into the deeper dungeons of Castle Mammon in FIST II. Your mission is to recover the five rings of Allion from the Digga Maze whilst avoiding or slaying the belligerent servants of the High priest Kaddis-Ra. As in the FF books, you make decisions by selecting numbered "scenes", except that in FIST you only have to dial the required number on your telephone. You can even save your position at any time, so that you can restart the game at a later date with your inventory and your character attributes intact. And though FIST II is aimed at the novice player, it should present a lasting challenge because the layout of the eight-level dungeon is rearranged at the start of each month.

You can log-on to FIST II by dialling 0898 800 877, but be warned that the cost per minute is 25p if you play at off-peak times (between 6pm and 8am, and all weekend), and 38p at peak time.

Fancy a peep behind the scenes at FIST HQ? Computerdial need one would-be monster to go on an expenses-paid day out in London and take part in a recording session so that they can have their voice put in the FIST II dungeon, where it can terrorize FIST players for all eternity.

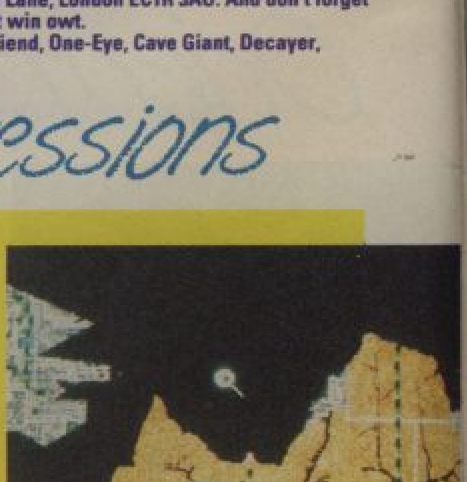
All you have to do is dial 0898 800 870 (charged at the rates described above) to hear a one minute recording of five monstrous growls. Then look at the list below and try to work out which of the eight beasts made which noise.

Then write your five favoured monsters on the back of a postcard or sealed-down envelope, in the order in which you heard them, then send it off to THE PHONEY FIST COMPO, C+ VG, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. And don't forget to include your name and address or you won't win owt.

The Monsters: Banshee, Darkbone Skeleton, Fiend, One-Eye, Cave Giant, Decayer, Nazorilla, Rapscallion.

First Impressions

This is Raider, first release from new label Impressions ("Software With Style") which is to make its debut on Amiga shelves in mid-March, priced at £19.99. Gameplay will be familiar to anyone who's played Oids or Thrust, and puts you in a spacecraft, blasting gun turrets off the surfaces of four planets and using your tractor beam to collect powerplants. There are 40 levels some of which feature inverse gravity and invisible planets, and we'll be looking at it carefully next issue.




IT IS THE YEAR 2019
"The Running Man" is a deadly game that no-one had ever survived. But . . . . . Schwarzenegger has yet to play.
The Running Man is an action packed, sideways parallax scrolling game in 5 sections with some spectacular backdrops and impressive sound.
Look out for The Running Man Video by Braveworld.
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Shadey Deals



Here's a rare photograph of the C+VG Rad Lads (and Lasses) sporting the very latest in summertime optical accoutrements ("shades" to you). They go by the catchy handle of Sunrapz and take the form of a shaped strip of plastic which rolls into a cylinder. When you unroll them and put them on your face the springy plastic tries to reform into a cylinder, and so the edges grip the side of your head gently but securely, providing all-round shelter from harmful ultra-violet and infra-red rays. The Sunrapz come in mirrored, or tinted, in a variety of colours and will be in the shops this summer for the princely sum of £2.99.

If you just can't wait to look as cool as the C+VG Formation Summerwear Modelling Team, here's your chance to get hold of your own advance pair of Sunrapz. Montpellier Trading have provided us with 30 pairs of Sunrapz to give away to the first 30 people to write in, telling us the distance between the Earth and the Sun in miles. Send your entries to: You Are My Sunshine Compo, C+VG, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU.

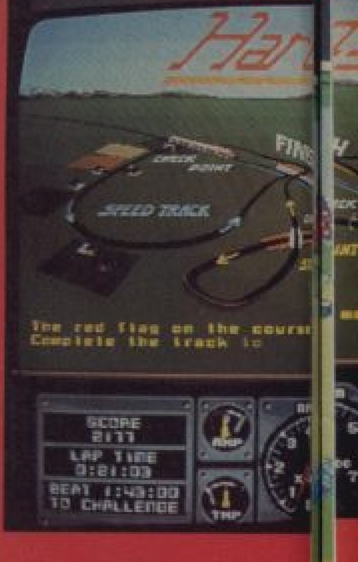
Mindscape Gardening

Now that Mindscape have set themselves up as an independent software publisher in this green and pleasant land, they have been releasing plans concerning the software seeds they're going to be sowing this spring. It's not often you get such a lyrical opening to a news story, is it? Anyway — the games. Balance of Power 1990 is an up-to-date sequel to the highly-acclaimed 16-bit simulation of global nuclear politics, which boasts a host of new features over the original. That one will be out on Amiga, PC and, later on, ST.

Next up on the C64 and 16-bit machines, are the American Sports series, which includes Indoor Soccer, Clubhouse Sports (that's 3D Pinball, Billiards, Table Football, Crazy Pool, Shooting Gallery and Ski Ball (?)), Ice Hockey and two others, which Mindscape are keeping under wraps for the moment. All the games have a managerial/strategy side to them as well as being arcade sports sims.

At the end of March, 16-bit owners will be able to enter The Colony, which is the venue for a 3D arcade adventure, very much in the Mercenary vein. Looks very interesting, as does Visions of Aftermath: The Boomtown, a PC simulation of survival after the bomb has dropped. Should be an education.







Biffa Brings Bucks

Astute software house CDS sold so many of their Football Fortunes computer/ board games (starring Notts Forest manager and part-time pugilist, Brian Clough) that they're re-releasing it across every format, even on the BBC, Atari 8-bits and Commodore +4! Prices range from £7.99 to £14.99, and it should be in a shop near you at this very moment.



Charts

Psygnosis Bowled Over





What with Skateball, Titan, et al, there certainly seems to be a growing abundance of futuristic ball sports on the software scene these days. In fact, chalk up another one, dear reader, because Psygnosis are releasing Ballistix on the ST and Amiga. The game is alleged to be a variation on football with multiple accoutrements, including 130 pitches, multiple balls, bumpers, Hoovers, redefinable gameplay and "much more!"

License to Thrill



Domark's licenses of the Atari/Tengen coin-ops APB, Xybots and Toobin' are old news, so we won't tell you about those. However, did you know that they have also acquired the license to convert Atari's latest road racer, Hard Drivin', which we raved over in our ATEI report last issue. This should go nicely with their other up-and-coming motor racing conversion, that of Atari's Final Lap. Plans for the ST and Amiga versions of this game include a data-link between two computers allowing you to race against a friend, just like the arcade game!

Also on the Domark motoring front, famous Aston Martin/Lotus driver, James Bond, is soon to be making his fourth appearance on the Domark Label, in the game of his latest film, License to Kill. The game should hit the street just as the movie hits your cinema screens, which, in Gregorian calendar terms, is June. We'll be having a lot more information on that in an imminent issue, ok? (winks a knowing wink).

Seuck Pirates Outlawed



All you potential Shoot 'Em Up Constructors had better watch out, because there's a pirate version of Outlaw's Amiga utility currently doing the rounds on the European pirate circuit! You don't care do you? Well, you should, because not only does this bootleg version lack many of the features of the finished program, it also comes with a very nasty virus which is immune to most virus killers! Hmm, nasty, eh?

"But," we hear you cry, "where is the kosher SEUCK so we can satisfy our perfectly natural urges to build best-selling blasts?" The answer is that the program's launch has been put back to late March or early April, to give Outlaw time to incorporate a number of improvements.

ALL FORMATS TOP TEN

1	Operation Wolf - Ocean.
2	Robocop - Ocean.
3	After Burner - Activision.
4	Thunder Blade - US Gold.
5	Bomb Jack - Encore.
6	Ace 2 - Cascade.
7	D. Dragon - Melbourne House.
8	Joe Blade 2 - Players.
9	Batman - Ocean.
10	Commando - Encore.

Christmas has been and gone but Ocean's yuletide smashes are still riding high. Nothing new in the charts this month. Dullsville

SPECTRUM TOP TEN

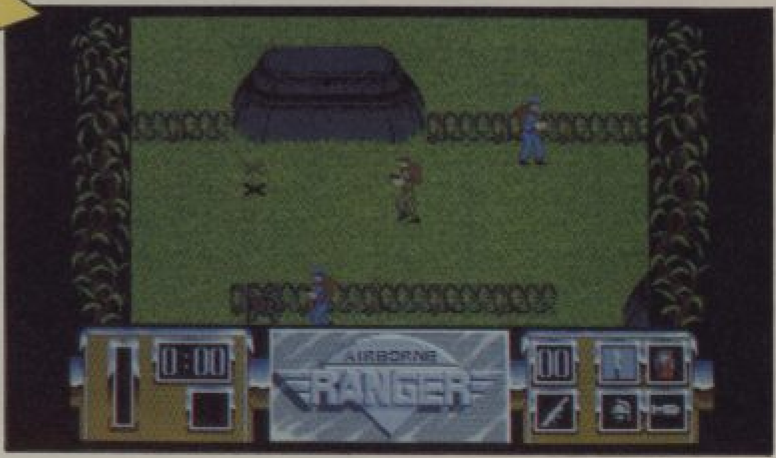
1	Robocop - Ocean.
2	Afterburner - Activision.
3	Operation Wolf - Ocean.
4	Thunder Blade - US Gold.
5	F'mula Grand Prix - Alternative.
6	Ace 2 - Cascade.
7	Knightmare - Mastertronic.
8	Skooldaze - Alternative.
9	Through the Trap Door - Alt.
10	Back to Skool - Alt.

Robocop still shoots the competition out of sight in the Speccy chart. Strong showings for various re-releases at the foot of the Top Ten.

1	Robocop - Ocean.
2	Afterburner - Activision.
3	Microprose Socc. - M'prose.
4	D. Dragon - Mel. House.
5	Operation Wolf - Ocean.
6	Thunder Blade - US Gold.
7	Bomb Jack - Encore.
8	Pro Ski Sim. - C. Masters.
9	Ace 2 - Cascade.
10	Ace - Cascade.

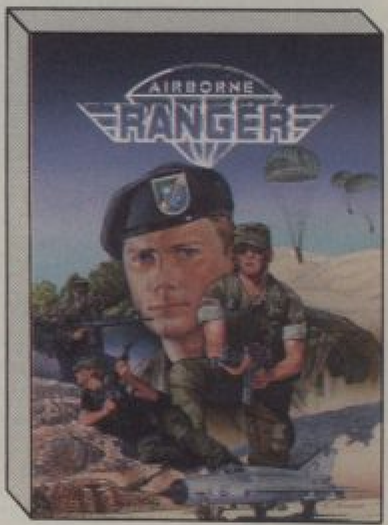
Just when we thought you had no taste at all – with the likes of Double Dragon in the Top Ten – you surprise us by purchasing Microprose Soccer into the charts. Nice one.

REVIEW



AIRBORNE RANGER

✱ MACHINES: C64/SPEC/AMS/ST/IBM/AMIGA ✱ SUPPLIER MICROPROSE ✱ PRICE: C64 £14.95 CASSETTE, £19.95 DISK SPEC £9.95 SPEC +3 £14.95, AMS £14.95 CASSETTE £19.95 DISK, ST £24.95 ✱ VERSION TESTED ATARI ST



Not content with the purely lifelike, militaristic simulations that MicroProse have brought out in recent times, Major Bill Stealey decided to take a step out of line and introduce some of the strategy and quick-reaction thinking that MicroProse simulations are renowned for and pump them into an 'action strategy' game. The result? Airborne Ranger, an addictive game combining the best of MicroProse strategy with fast arcade action where you control one of the troops belonging to that crack American combat unit who have earned the priviledge to wear the exclusive black beret.

As the best of the best, you are chosen to single-handedly accomplish twelve missions, set in three different parts of the world. Amongst the frozen wastes of the Arctic, you must beware the pitfalls of walking on thin ice. In the more temperate climate of Central Europe, you are faced with the prospect of coming up against the best frontline troops that the massed Communist hordes can produce. Alternatively, you could end up somewhere in the Persian Gulf taking out a fuel dump where, if the enemy doesn't get you, the heat and fatigue almost certainly will.

On each mission, you can choose from an impressive array of weaponry and supplies that will form the contents of three supply canisters that will be your lifeline on your mission. Grenades, magazines for your carbine, LAW missiles, knifes, time charges and first aid packs can all be selected to best suit your needs for the coming mission.

Once packed, you are flown to your destination in an Osprey aircraft. Having parachuted safely down to terra firma, the action really starts to hot up as you run, walk or crawl your way towards your objective, picking up the dropped supplies as you go. The difficulty can be altered before each mission, thus affecting your chances of survival. However, those with experience can go for a higher risk and the greater glory that ensues on return from a successful mission.

Although proving popular with simulation die-hards, seasoned arcade players will also enjoy getting to grips with Airborne Ranger. The game can be played as a fast-moving, hit-and-run action game, but players will soon find that it will require some thought and pre-mission planning if one is to succeed in achieving each objective. This is where MicroProse's reputation for excellence in strategy and simulation games comes in. Often it is a matter of getting to your objective in as quiet a manner as possible, thereby ensuring that the enemy remains unaware of your presence.

Once you have achieved your objective, you must make tracks for your rendezvous point where you will be picked up by a waiting Osprey. However, one word of warning – there is a strict time limit to each mission so, although stealth may be important, lack of time might occasionally mean having to run the gauntlet in order to succeed. Are you man enough to handle the pressure?

The action is real – the suspense triggers the adrenalin rush that starts your senses working overtime. Airborne Ranger is an addictive strategy game that will have you playing over and over again in an effort to complete the next mission and get back in one piece.

'Airborne Ranger is a move away from the simulation side of MicroProse releases but is still a step above the normal Rambo/Commando style of shoot-'em-up. An effective combination which should attract those looking for a thought-provoking game' – TGM

'. . . an excellent game with a first-class mix of strategy and arcade action.' 'Once I'd learned that stealth with a knife gets you further than blasting everything in sight . . . trying to complete the other missions was quite compelling. A game which needs careful thought as well as great firepower is revealed' – Crash

ATARI ST

✱ GRAPHICS	82%
✱ SOUND	70%
✱ VALUE	95%
✱ PLAYABILITY	95%
✱ **OVERALL**	**90%**

MICRO PROSE
SIMULATION ✱ SOFTWARE

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C+VG REVIEWS

The Ratings

When a game is reviewed, we give ratings for five different criteria:

GRAPHICS
Does the game look good? Is the scrolling smooth? Are the sprites flickery? Is the animation realistic? This mark covers all

SOUND
Sound and music that enhance a game are given high marks. The sound rating is low if the music or effects aren't appropriate or atmospheric.

VALUE
With this rating we take into consideration the price of the game, the amount of entertainment it offers, and the quality of the packaging and presentation. Basically, is it worth the price?

PLAYABILITY
This tells you how addictive and enjoyable the game is — the higher the rating, the more playable the game is.

OVERALL
The most important rating of all. This is what we think of the game as a whole, taking into consideration all the other ratings. In short, how good the game really is.

The Marks

85+
A C+VG HIT! An outstanding game that shouldn't be missed.

70-85
A very good game that missed out on a higher accolade due to minor discrepancies. Should definitely be tried, though.

40-70
Varies between just below average to fairly good. Could still appeal to fans of the genre.

10-30
Generally a poor game that mightn't even appeal to the most ardent fan.

10–
Ugh! A ghastly travesty to buy for your worst enemy.





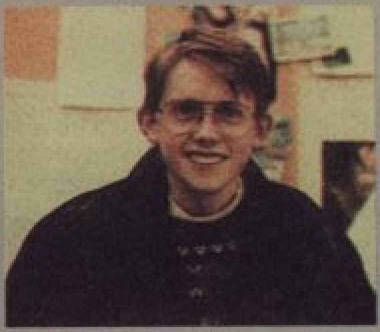




JULIAN 'JAZ' RIGNALL
Practically lives in the arcades — and if he isn't on Brighton Pier, it's a safe bet that he's at home counting his hoard of computers and consoles. Shoot 'em ups are the love of his life — although he never says no to a good arcade adventure or beat 'em up.
FAVE GAMES: Dragon Spirit, Vindicators, Populous.

EUGENE 'EUGE' LACEY
Eugene has been in the software industry longer than he can remember, and certainly knows a good game when he sees one. He's a shoot 'em up fan, and is also partial to good arcade adventures and role playing games.
FAVE GAMES: Space Harrier (Amiga), Gradius, Strider (arcades).





PAUL 'BAPS OOT' GLANCEY
Despite his diminutive size, Paul wields a mean joystick. He's primarily a thinking man, and loves arcade adventures and puzzle games. However, he's not adverse to the odd shoot 'em up . . .
FAVE GAMES: Sword of Sodan, Vigilante, Denarius.

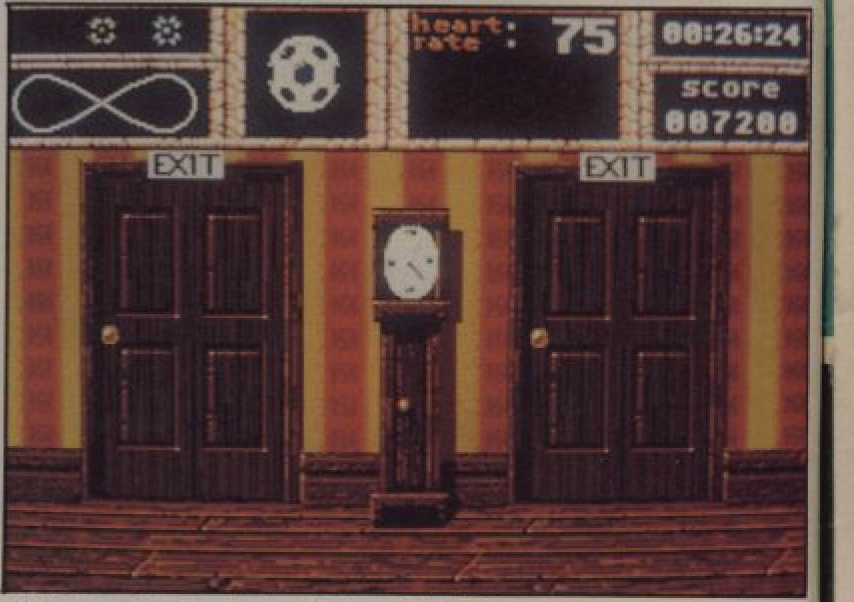
'CORKY' CIARAN BRENNAN
When it comes to computer games Ciaran's not fussy — as long as it's enjoyable. He's an Amiga and ST owner, but also likes good 8-bit games.
FAVE GAMES: Hybris, Hostages, Cyberball.



WEIRD



Swing over his head or he'll chomp you.



Which door? — and what is the clock for?

DREAMS

▶ Rainbird
▶ ST/Amiga £24.99, C64 Cass £14.99, Disk £19.99, Amstrad Cass £14.99, Disk £19.99, Spectrum £14.99.

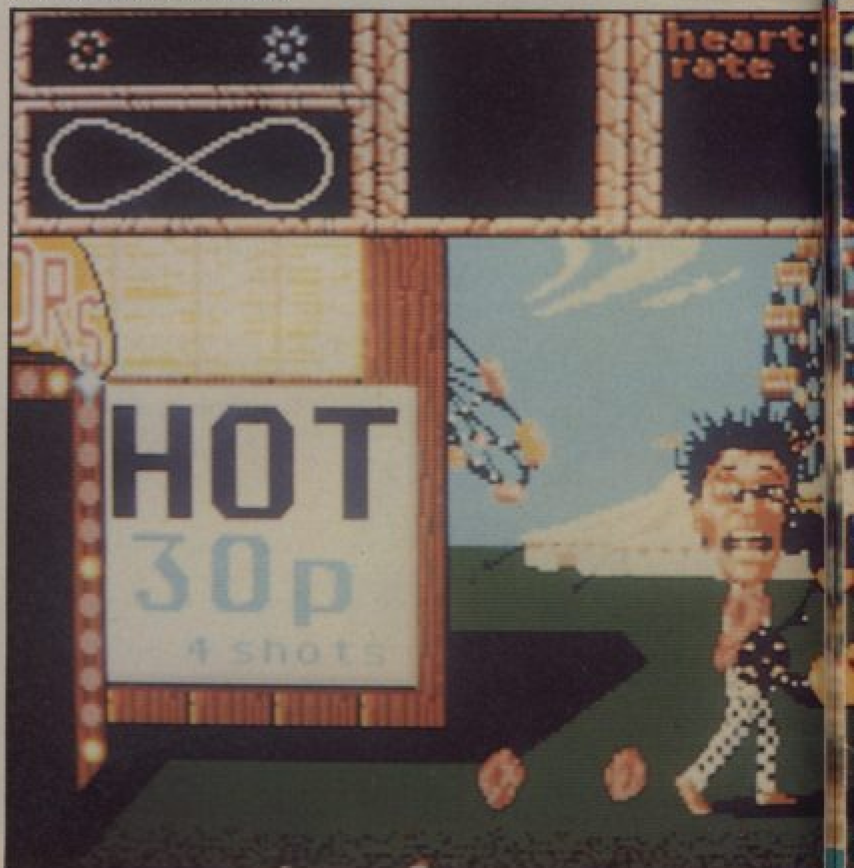
TV exposure is a mixed blessing. Rainbird thought they had cracked it when they got *Weird Dreams* onto Motormouth every Saturday morning. Great they thought — you punters are going to see little bits of the much talked about arcade adventure — supposedly whetting appetites to see even more of it.

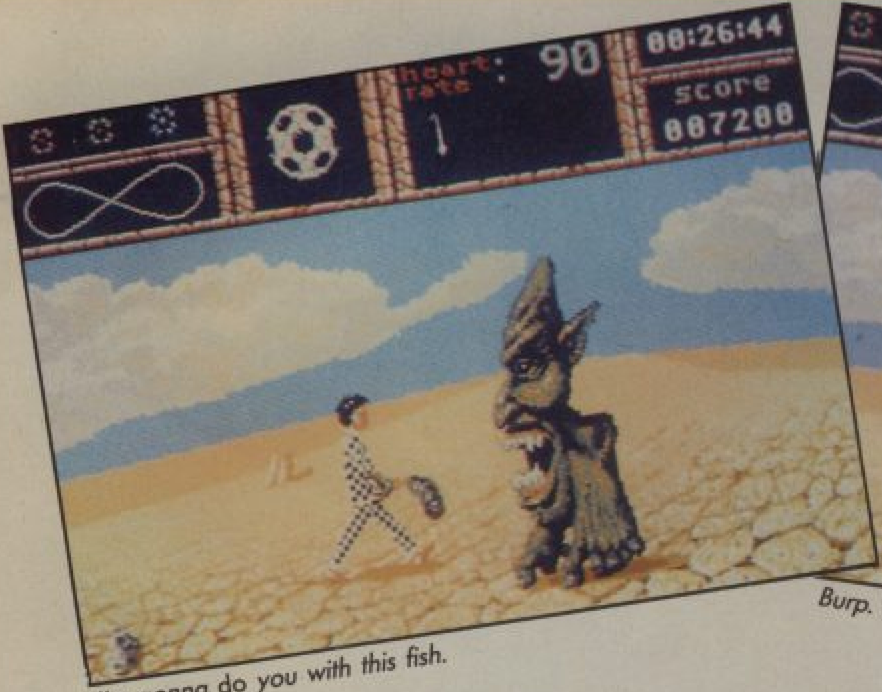
Sounds like a great piece of hype, right? Wrong. A large number of punters *do* go into the shop to enquire about *Weird Dreams* — but they expect it to be a quiz like *Trivial Pursuit*. Apparently quite surprised to learn that *Weird Dreams* is in actual fact an arcade adventure. In the TV programme you proceed through the game by answering general knowledge questions — in the game you have to rely on games playing ability.

The hero of the game is one Steve Trevathon who, whilst lying on an operating theatre dreams some very weird dreams. Poor old Steve is mad, you see. He lost his marbles as a result of a failed love affair. His only hope is surgery.

It is down to you to look after Steve in his dreams — protecting him from his worst fears. Of course you are going to have to get him out of the candy floss machine first. And if you want him to wake up a perfectly healthy and sane individual you must also find the six orbs scattered throughout the game and take them to a final encounter in the desert with a giant brain. Hmm, sounds weird. It is weird. The game certainly lives up to its title in this respect. Some of the

Bzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz.





I'm gonna do you with this fish.



Burp. Pardon me.

landscapes are desert-like with dried cracked ground, sun-baked monsters and brightly coloured flying fish.

There are other scenes in the game — like the fairground, the English garden, the Musical Keyboard, Hall or Mirrors, Haunted House, but it is the desert scenes that are the most memorable. There is just something totally oddball about beating a monster with a rainbow coloured fish that you have just leapt into the air and caught.

But there is more to *Weird Dreams* than simple arcade entertainment. Rainbird are pushing hard the fact that it is an adventure as well. Some of the puzzles are quite tough — requiring a good hard look at everything on screen and a bit of lateral thinking. There is also a correct order in which things have to be done and places visited.

Some of the scenes in the game have a haunting nightmarish quality about them. The little girl in the garden for example. So innocent and sweet playing ball beside the flower beds — but what's that behind her back and what is happening to that ball?

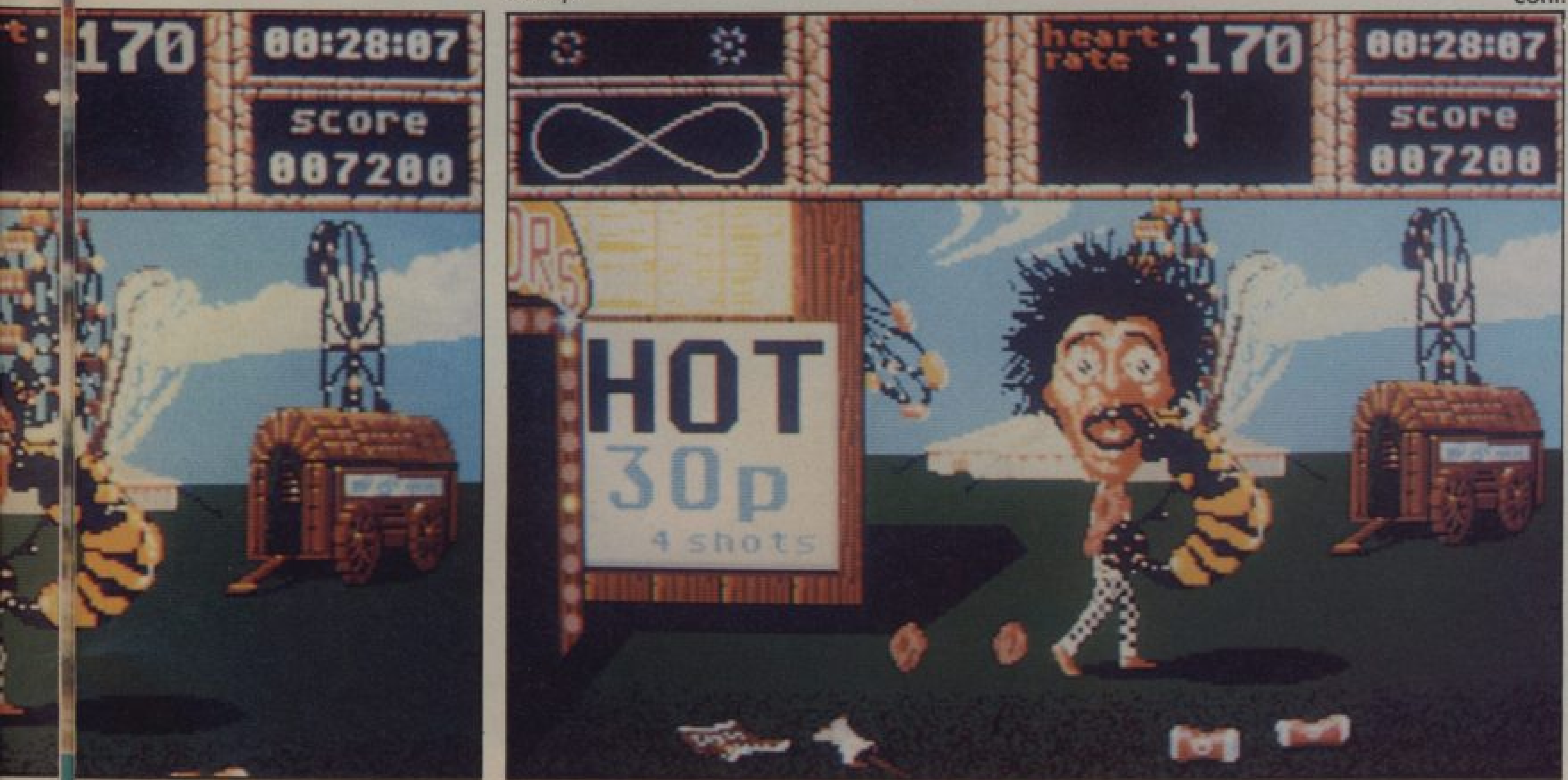
Weird Dreams is also a race against time. Should you survive the giant candy floss machine you will find your self in the fairground where you confront a giant wasp. You can escape from it this time by dodging into the Hall of Mirrors but it is only matter of time — about twenty minutes until he breaks through to get you.

Weird Dreams provides a unique insight into the workings of a game designer's mind. Hermann Serrano had been to the dentist the week *Weird Dreams* was conceived — hence the toothiness of the monsters. There is also a chicken — like monster that was inspired by a bird defrosting on fellow author James Hutchby's kitchen table. Coding *Weird Dreams* did nothing for getting rid of the duo's nightmares though. They are both still petrified of wasps.

This is all very well, it's good fun, has excellent graphics and sound effects but one question comes to mind to anyone who, like me, saw *Weird Dreams* at the PC show last September.

cont.

Chomp.




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Reviews

WEIRD DREAMS



▲ Catch my ball little girlie.



▲ The knife comes out if she gets bored.

What's new? There just doesn't seem to be enough dreams to get through. The ones that are there are fine — but most of them we have seen before either at the PC Show or on Motormouth. It's not as if Motormouth only shows you a small percentage of the dreams — it shows you most of them.

The game does have several challenging and well thought out puzzles, with a sting in its tail at the end of the game BUT — there are just not enough scenes to discover. Part of the reward in playing any arcade adventure is to explore it and find out what graphical delight is locked behind the next door. I have a feeling that gamers are going to discover *Weird Dreams'* secrets a little bit too quickly.

In fairness to the authors, there are some new things in there — like the demonic lawn mower in the garden and fish tank in the keyboard scene, and the best end-game trick I have ever seen.

That said, I cannot get away from an overall feeling of anti-climax. If only they had given us a bit more of the same — perhaps by adding another disk or two. As it stands in the game play value for money stakes I am not sure you are getting full value.

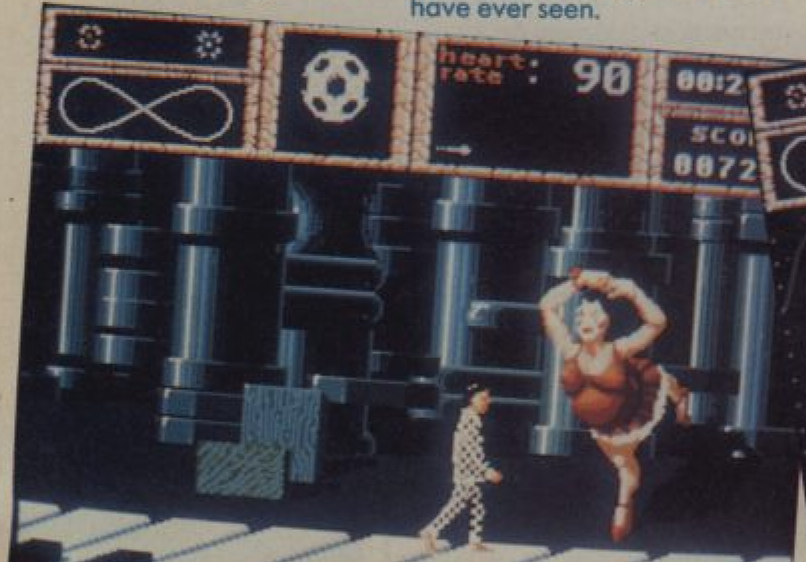
EUGENE LACEY

UPDATE

The ST version will be on sale in a week's time followed by the Amiga a month later, and Spectrum and C64 versions in June. A PC version is also in development — though not due for launch until the Autumn.

ST

GRAPHICS	83%
SOUND	70%
VALUE	49%
PLAYABILITY	60%
OVERALL	**59%**

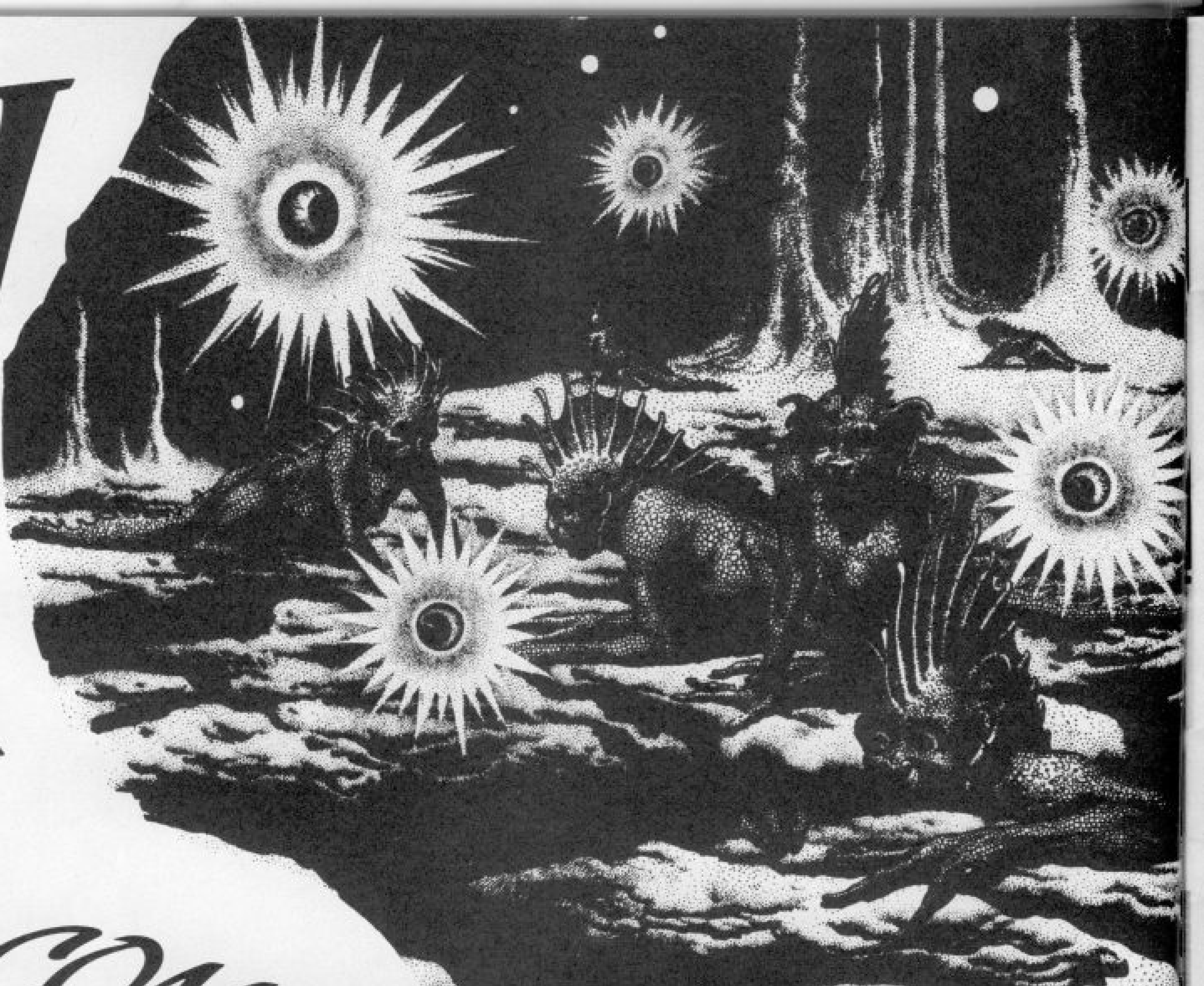


▲ No — she doesn't want to dance.



▲ The candy floss machine will mangle you.

WEIRD COMPO DREAMS



Stop dreaming about owning a Sky TV dish. Stop dreaming about being the smartest kid on the block, or even down your street — the one with the wacky new TV channel.

Stop dreaming about it and get down to entering our Weird Dreams competition in which we will give away a Sky dish to the lucky winner. Five not quite so lucky runners-up will receive a blow-up fish to play with in the bath or, if you live in Grimsby, take to the football with you.

Ten even unluckier runners-runners up will receive a Weird Dreams/Motormouth T Shirt. How about those for prizes — weird, or what?

All you have to do to win is send in a picture of your worst nightmare. Remember to write your name and address on the back of your drawing. We can only return drawings if you enclose a large stamped, addressed envelope. And if you don't have nightmares just use your imagination.

Our poutliscious Art Supremo Andrea 'Scalpel' Walker will judge the competition and her decision will be final. Your entry must reach us no later than April 16 1989.

Entries to Ooooh What a Nightmare Compo, C+VG, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

Name..

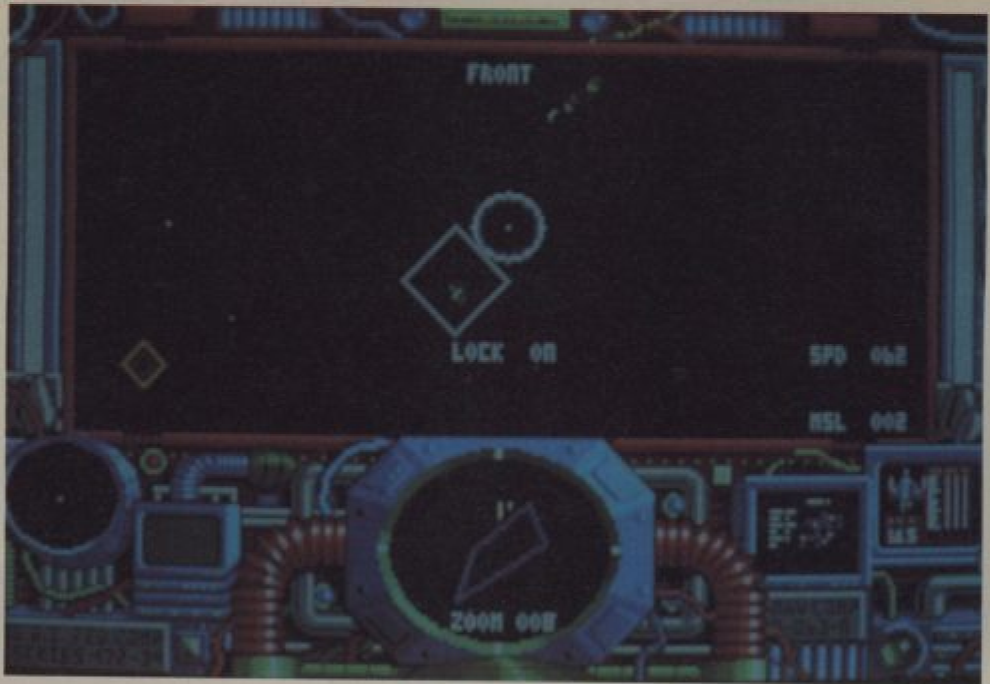
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Reviews





▶ **GREMLIN GRAPHICS**
▶ **ATARI ST/AMIGA, £29.99**

Well, it's been two years in the making, but the space flight simulation which the pundits reckoned would wipe the floor with *Elite* has finally arrived.

FEDERATI
FREE TRADE

Now, here's the paradox. Paul Glancey, reviewer and part-time *Elite* fan is presented with the game which will, he is assured, change his life. Said reviewer plays game, but does not leave the computer with a euphoric grin on his face. So, what went wrong?

There's no denying that, on paper at least, FOFT provides everything — and I mean EVERYTHING — that a space simulation pilot could possibly want. FOFT is played in simulated space which is the equivalent of 18 trillion light years across. This space contains some eight million planets to explore and trade between, each with its own set of physical and cultural attributes. "Wow!" you're thinking. Well, cool your jets, baby — there's more.

Your ship is kitted out with a computer through which you can save and load games to and from disk, view a ship library and access the SIMPLE line editor which lets you fill 16K of memory with your own computer programs written in a miniature programming language.

Further to these, the computer lets you access Galnet, a kind of interstellar communications system through which you can transmit and receive messages to and from FOFT HQ and other traders, order spare parts for instant delivery to your ship and arrange the sale and purchase of merchandise.

Trading is as prominent a feature as it was in *Elite*, but the range of commodities is rather larger in FOFT, running to 28 items in six categories. The price of each is determined by the attributes of the planet, as you would expect, and changing supply and demand causes prices to fluctuate as you watch, so there is even a timing element to trading success.

If you would prefer to live by









ION OF ERS

the laser, there are seven weapons of varying strength classifications available for connection to your ship's three weapons systems. Some of the more exotic armaments are Sand Dispensers, which lay clouds of sharp sand particles to cut pursuing enemies to shreds, drones, which fly at your wing-tips until you release them, and then they hunt down the nearest hostile ship and destroy it, and Gauss Guns, which use magnetic induction to shoot pieces of scrap metal at a target in front of you.

Once you're tooled up and ready for action, it's time to get some purpose in your life. Get on to Galnet, dial up FOFT and they will hunt through your records and give you a mission suited to your combat rating (which, incidentally, runs from cadet, through the ranks, to admiral as you complete missions). Co-ordinates of your destination planet are then fed into your navigation conputer.

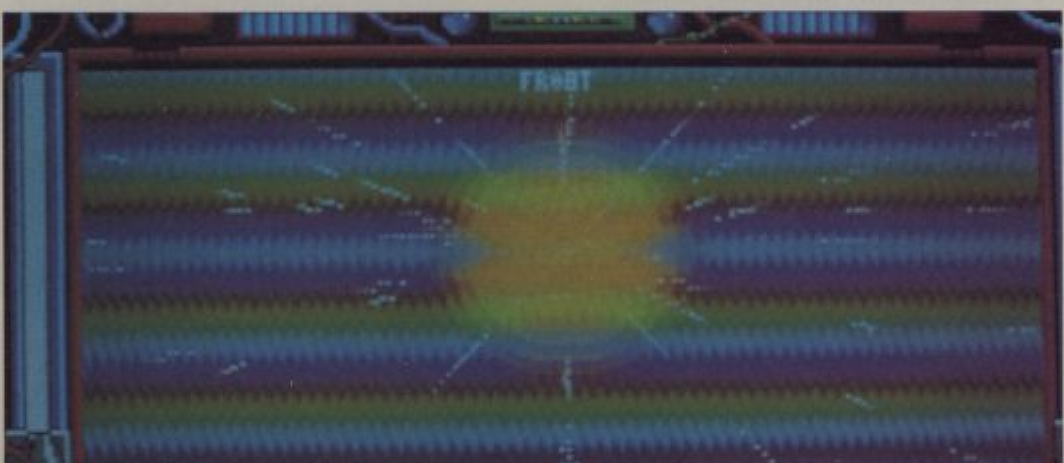
Selecting the NavComp displays a 3D map of the spiral armed galaxy you're in, and once you've finished spinning it around with the joystick you can zoom in on your current location and lock in a course. That done, you can undock from the space station and prepare to enter hyperspace.

Once you're back in real space your 3D RADAR is lit up with traces from nearby craft. The scanner is similar to the one in *Elite*, with dots on coloured stalks indicating the relative position of other ships. The red traces are enemy craft, and these usually show up on a passive Warning Radar as they lock missile targeting beams on you.

Combat is one respect in which FOFT does not resemble *Elite*, basically because it is heavily flawed. First you have to locate your enemy, so naturally you check your RADAR, zooming in to about X5 magnification to get an uncluttered view of your surroundings. At this magnification, enemy ships fly a very fast, and apparently random course around a point halfway between your ship and the edge of the scan, which is just out of visual range. This makes them impossible to sight until they break and start a high speed strafing run on your ship. Trying to place a shot at this stage is more a matter of luck than skill, because by the time you've swung around to face the laser blasts which are vapourising your shields, the enemy ship is out of sight. Give me the tense dogfighting tactics of *Elite* any day.

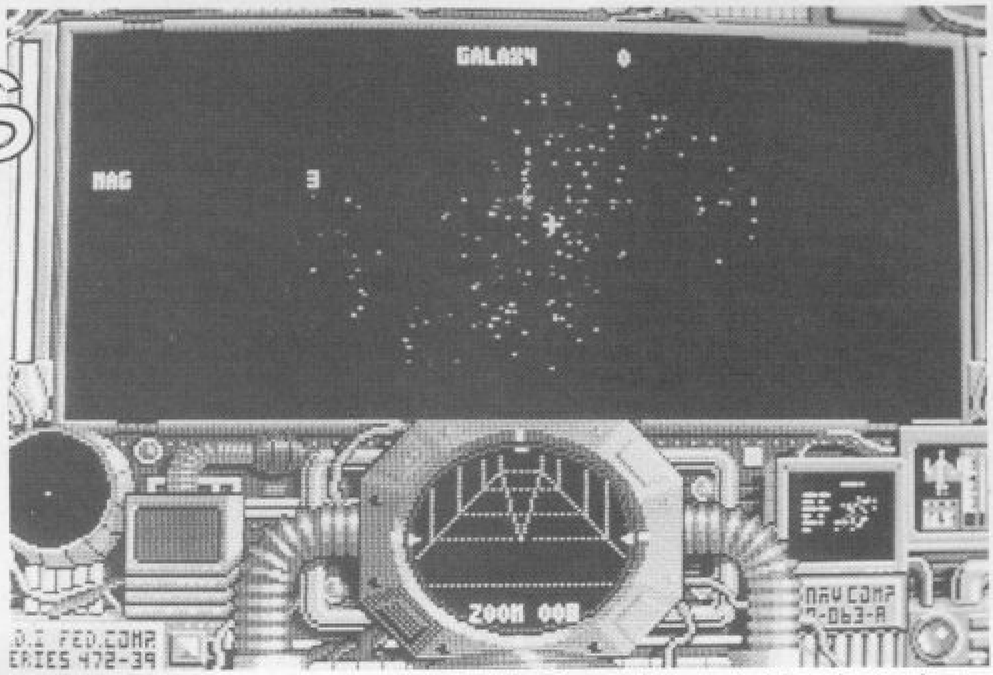
The alternative to fighting is to talk your attacker out of killing you (you can't run away, incidentally, because your ship doesn't fly fast enough, and the Time Skip interplanetary jump drive doesn't operate when there are enemy craft in the vicinity). To do this, you have to deactivate your weapons systems and go into communications mode, which displays an orientation bar at the centre of the main screen. If you can manoeuvre an enemy ship into this sight, you are given its twelve digit Galnet ID code, so you can contact him. Well, you can contact him if you: select the main computer; type NET to select the communications software; key in your own twelve digit ID, or alternatively type HELP then enter your name; press T to transmit; type in his twelve digit ID (you remembered to pause

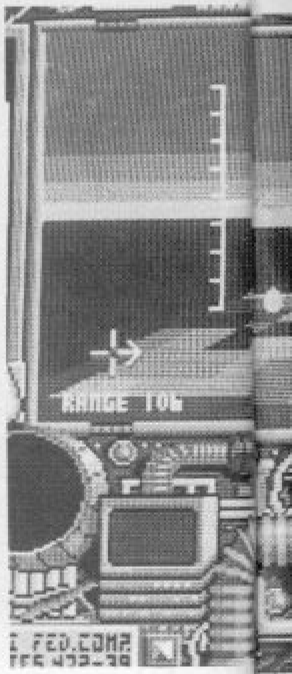




Reviews

transmit; type in his twelve digit ID (you remembered to pause the game and write that down, didn't you?). Then, IF you get through before he's blasted you to fragments, you can indulge in conversation with a semi-intelligent computer simulation of an alien gossip.





▲ *The NavComp displays its 3D galactic chart.*

have neither the space or the yardage of typewriter ribbon to detail the key-strokes necessary to buying a ton of ferrous metals (clue: after getting into Galnet, it takes 15 to buy then get back to the spaceship, flying through interplanetary space you wouldn't see the stars move, and in fact you'd have to be going flipping fast just to see the planets move. In his quest for realism, the programmer

FEDERATI[ON OF] FREE TRADE[RS]

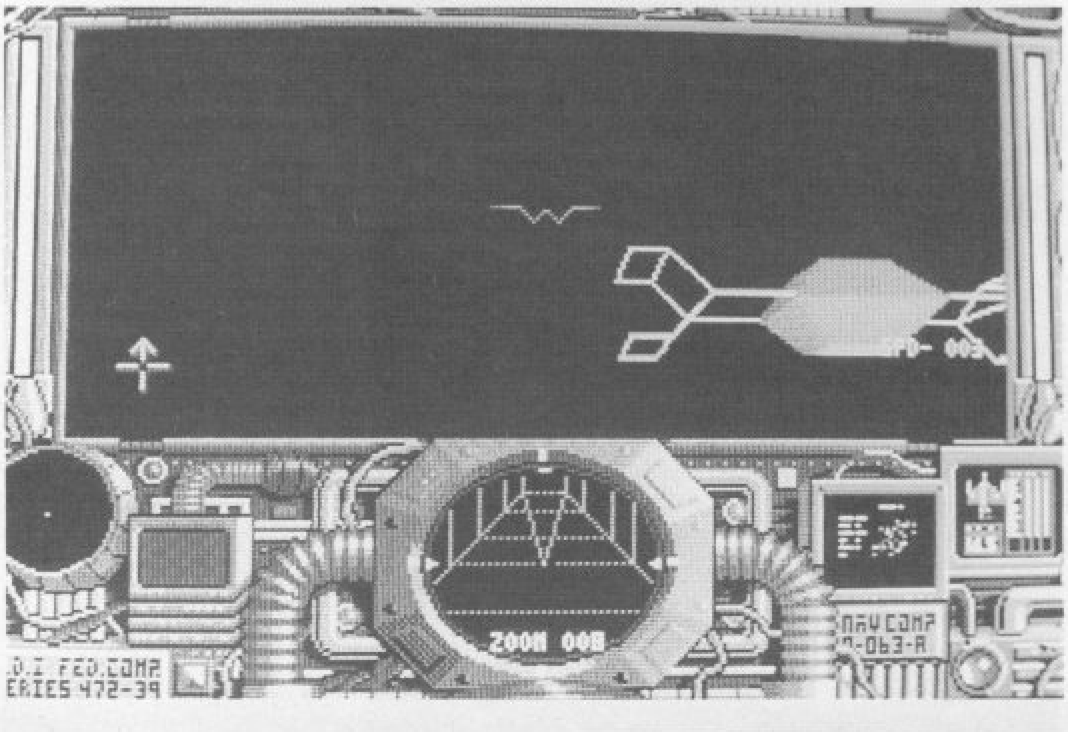
Almost good, that is.

If only the problems were restricted to those described above, but alas, they are not.

An inventory screen is always handy to have. In Elite you press a function key and there it is. As befits a more "realistic" program, FOFT's inventory facility is more difficult to access. First select the computer, the type NET (why you need to access Galnet to evaluate the contents of your own ship is a mystery to me), type in your twelve digit ID or type HELP then your name, hit the I key and you're there. Only another ten key-presses and you're back to the flight window. Trading is an even lengthier process, but I main screen). Look, I'm sorry to go on about this, but the computer is one of the game's key elements and it's such a chore to use that it quickly becomes irritating to have to write down codes, typ_ them out, then wade through menus to get where you want to be.

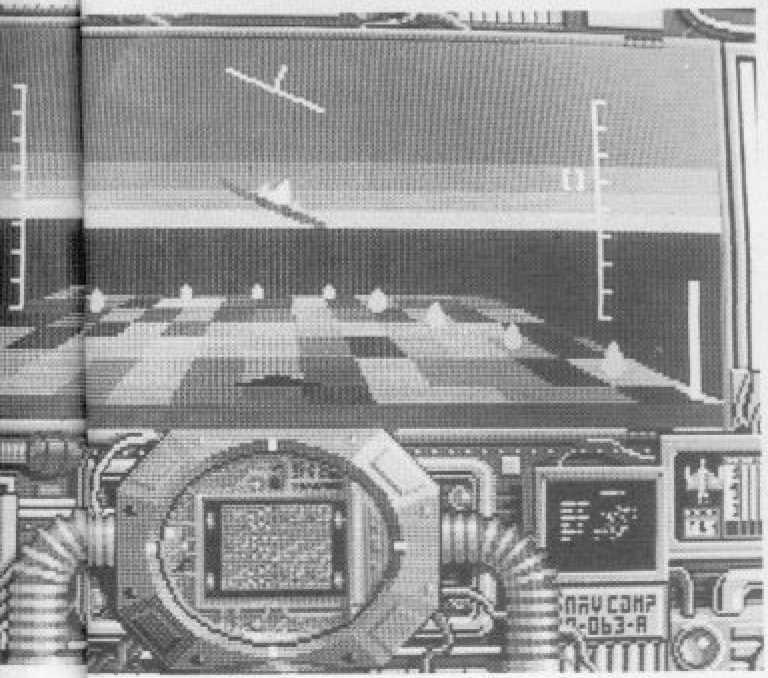
Realism also claims a victim during flight. If you were in a has observed both rules, and the upshot is no feeling of movement at all. To get yourself between planets quickly, you're supposed to use the Time Skip Drive, but that deactivates as soon as a red blip appears on the RADAR, and the abundance of enemy craft means you can only Time Skip for half a second before

▼ *Closing on the local space station.*

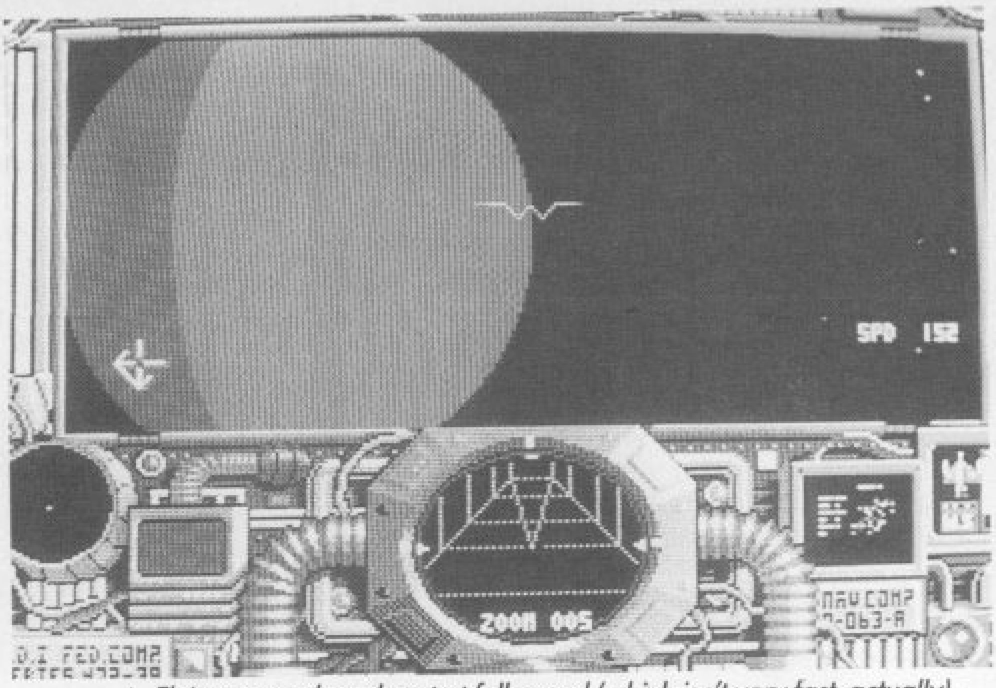


▼ *All systems fully functiona, cap'n.*





▲ *Winging it over the surface of a planet.*



▲ *Flying towards a planet at full speed (which isn't very fast, actually).*

you have to stop. To continue, you must destroy all enemy ships in range, and I've already told you how difficult that is. Consequently, any progress you make is very slow.

Speaking of slow, I might

ION OF
ERS

mention the planet-landing section. If a mission necessitates you taking a trip down to a planet surface, you are treated to a 3D scrolling Virus-type landscape littered with gun emplacements which take very accurate pot-shots at your ship. Your goal in this section is to follow an arrow to a runway where you can land and trade. Unfortunately, to reach the runway you have to fly at high altitude, doing very little apart from watching a distance meter counting down the miles to go to the runway. This goes on for about five minutes before the runway hoves into view, then you have a frantic ten seconds trying to line up your ship (you can't control your speed in this stage) before you fly past the runway and have to start again.

It really grieves me to have to criticise FOFT further, but I'm afraid I must make reference to the game manual, which runs to only 28 pages. This might sound like a lot to read through, but it leaves a lot of detail out. If you feel the need to program the computer (I can't see anyone needing to, but let's just imagine) you have a whole six and a half pages of reference information to help you, which is nowhere near enough. The manual also compares different types of engine and weapon using arbitrary figures with no units, so their meaning is lost.

The signs are that after many months of thinking up brilliant game concepts and producing technically excellent graphic sequences, the final touches were rushed, ruining the gameplay totally, I'm afraid that the programmers haven't realised that the more complex you make a game, the more effort you have to put into making it easy to operate. Unfortunately, FOFT's ship systems are so user-unfriendly that it is a real chore to play.

Even after a week of concentrated play, I have yet to break through the frustration barrier with this game. It has to be one of the greatest disappointments of recent months, and at thirty quid I would recommend any interested gamers to take a very long look at it before buying.

PAUL GLANCEY

ST

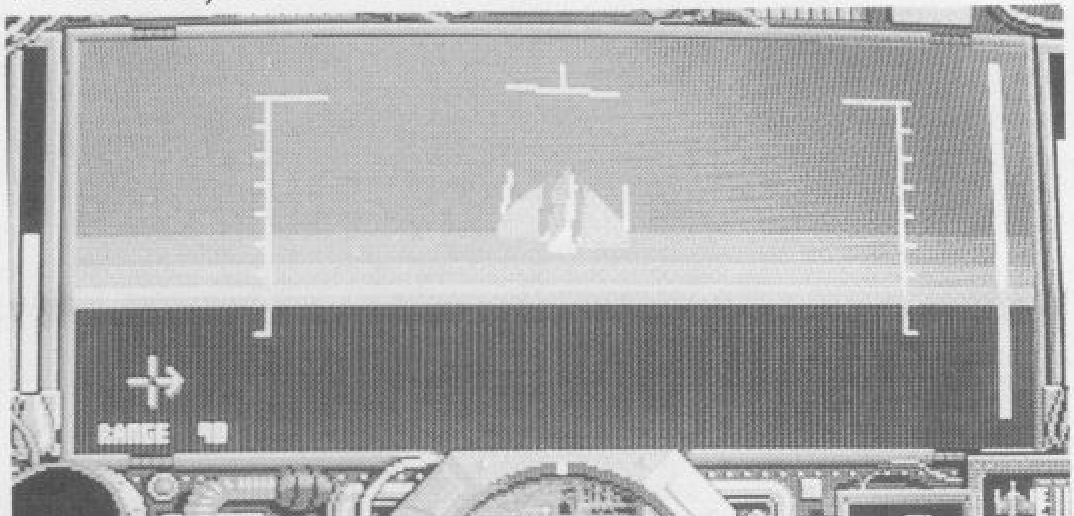
▶ GRAPHICS:	78%
▶ SOUND:	69%
▶ PLAYABILITY:	46%
▶ VALUE:	49%
▶ **OVERALL:**	**44%**

UPDATE

The Amiga version should be out as you read this. It will feature sampled sound effects and twenty tunes on a music disk, which should be an improvement over the nineteen unatmospheric melodies which acompany the ST version.

▼ *Cadet Glancey heads for the stars.*







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Reviews

POPUL

GAME OF THE MONTH C+VG

► ELECTRONIC ARTS
► ST/AMIGA £24.95

It's great fun being a God, you know. Sitting there on a cloud, looking down on all your devoted followers, occasionally lobbing a thunderbolt at an unbeliever's bum — or even doing the odd miracle every now and then to boost flagging church attendances. Yes, it's certainly fun being a God — take it from me, I've been one.

I've also been a bit of a devil, and I enjoyed that too. Giving those goodie two-shoes Gods a run for their money and generally disporting myself in a thoroughly wicked and loathesome manner.

And you could be either a God or Devil too if you play Electronic Arts' latest game, 'cos that's the sort of game it is — a deity simulator. Yes indeed! In this wholly original and unique game, you can become an ultimate being of good or evil and exercise your divine powers over early civilization.

At the start of a game three options are presented: custom, tutorial and conquest. The first allows you to change over sixty game parameters, and choose to play against another human, an Amiga, or set two Amiga characters against one another. Tutorial simply explains the game, and conquest starts the game proper.

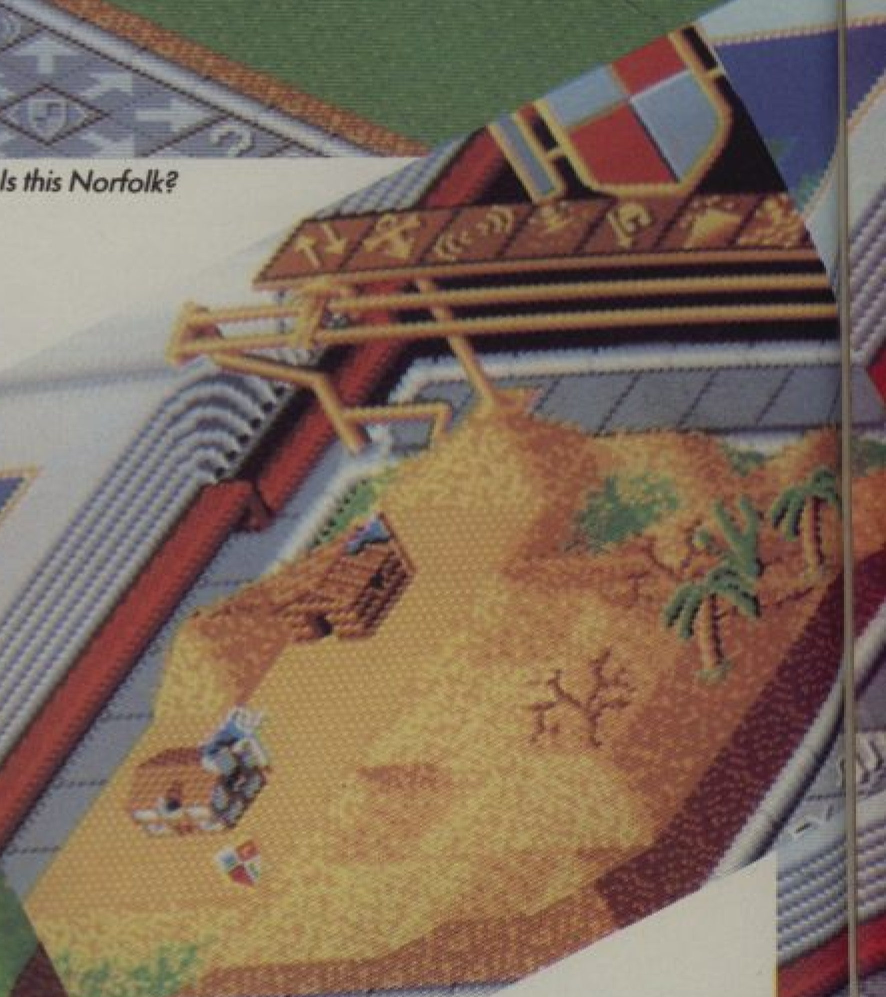
The objective is very straightforward. Playing a being of good or evil, the player simply has to ensure that his or her followers survive and conquer the people that follow the opposing God or Devil. However, doing that is far from easy.

The screen display looks pretty confusing at first, but well-written things out, and once you get into the game it all becomes very quick and easy to control.

There are two main displays; the largest one shows a close-up portion of the map, while a smaller one at the top left of the screen shows the entire map and the location of



▲ Is this Norfolk?



▲ A desert world.

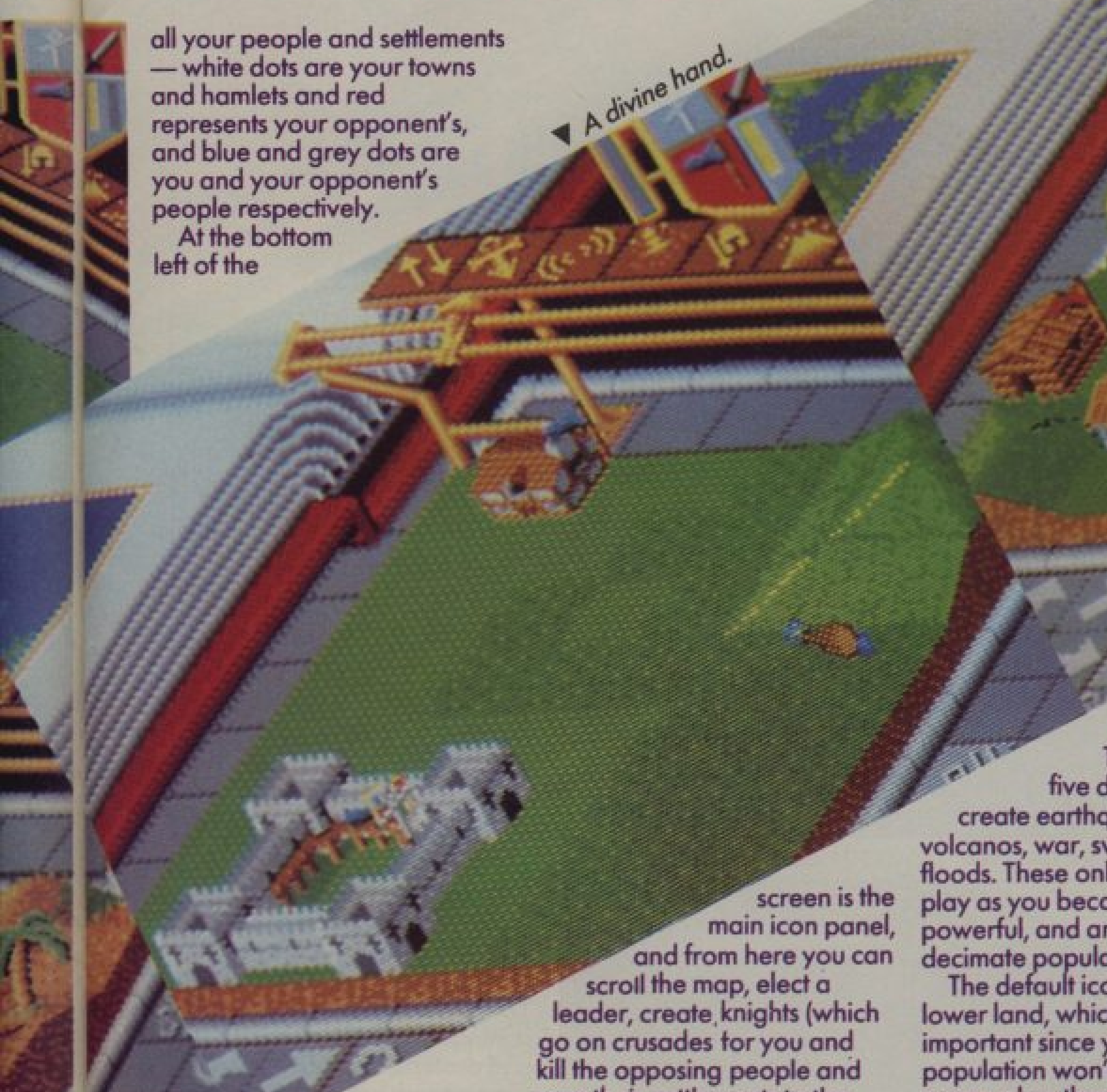


▲ Enemy settlement.

LOUS



▼ The skull depicts the enemy leader.



▼ A divine hand.

all your people and settlements — white dots are your towns and hamlets and red represents your opponent's, and blue and grey dots are you and your opponent's people respectively.

At the bottom left of the screen is the main icon panel, and from here you can scroll the map, elect a leader, create knights (which go on crusades for you and kill the opposing people and raze their settlements to the ground).

There are also five divine actions: create earthquakes, volcanos, war, swamp and floods. These only come into play as you become more powerful, and are used to decimate population.

The default icon is raise and lower land, which is very important since your population won't be able to grow unless they have flat land to cultivate. And you can also create new tracts of land to allow your people to cross seas and conquer neighbouring islands. So, to get going make your lands as flat as possible.

The other four icons give you some control over your people: 'go to papal magnet' makes people head to where your religious icon is planted, 'settle' sends your people forth to explore and colonise new lands, 'gather together' makes your people look for each other and combine to become stronger and fight then settle is the same as settle, but your people look for the enemy to attack before settling down.

As your people's civilization becomes more powerful, so do you, and you're able to create swamps, volcanoes and floods on your opponent's area and wipe out vast areas of his land. If you become powerful enough, you can access the battle icon, an armageddon mode that puts both God's papal magnets in the centre of the map and force both populations to converge on them and fight a bitter battle. There can be only one surviving race, so if you elect to press this divine smart bomb, make sure your population is bigger than the enemy's.

There are a thousand different computer levels to tackle, progressively getting harder the higher you go. Early levels are quite easy, with the opposing God unable to create earthquakes and the like, but as the enemy becomes more aggressive, strategy and thought come to the fore as you attempt to outwit the other God. It's certainly tough going, with the computer having some very mean tricks up its pious sleeve.

One of the many impressive features of *Populous* is the presentation — it's absolutely superb. The manual is informative, but isn't heavy going, and the on-screen presentation is utterly brilliant. It's obvious that the programmers have thought long and hard over this aspect of the game, and it has paid

▼ The papal magnet.



Reviews

POPULOUS



dividends. While the gameplay itself is very deep and has many, many facets, it's very easy to use and gives a feeling of total control and freedom within the game.

The graphics and sound are excellent, combining to create a convincing atmosphere, and the whole thing hangs together to produce one of the most addictive games I've played in years — I was kept glued to the Amiga for hours on end when I first played it, and have been going back to it regularly for weeks.

The difficulty is beautifully set to keep up a constant challenge, and the unpredictable nature of the gameplay makes sure that there's plenty of nasty surprises to keep you on your toes. And a thousand levels AND a two-player mode (via modem or datalink cable) giving lasting appeal that should run into months.

▲ *It's a bit chilly!*



▼ *One of many option screens.*

I'd class *Populous* with *The Sentinel* as a classic computer concept, and think that it's one of the best games available on 16-bit. Some may find the gameplay a little too abstract and esoteric, but those willing to persevere will find that *Populous* is one of the most enjoyable and rewarding games to appear on a computer.

It's divine in every sense of the word.

JULIAN RIGNALL

AMIGA

▶ GRAPHICS	90%
▶ SOUND	87%
▶ VALUE	90%
▶ PLAYABILITY	97%
▶ **OVERALL**	**96%**

UPDATE

Only an ST version is planned at the moment, and should be identical to the Amiga to all intents and purposes.



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DEN

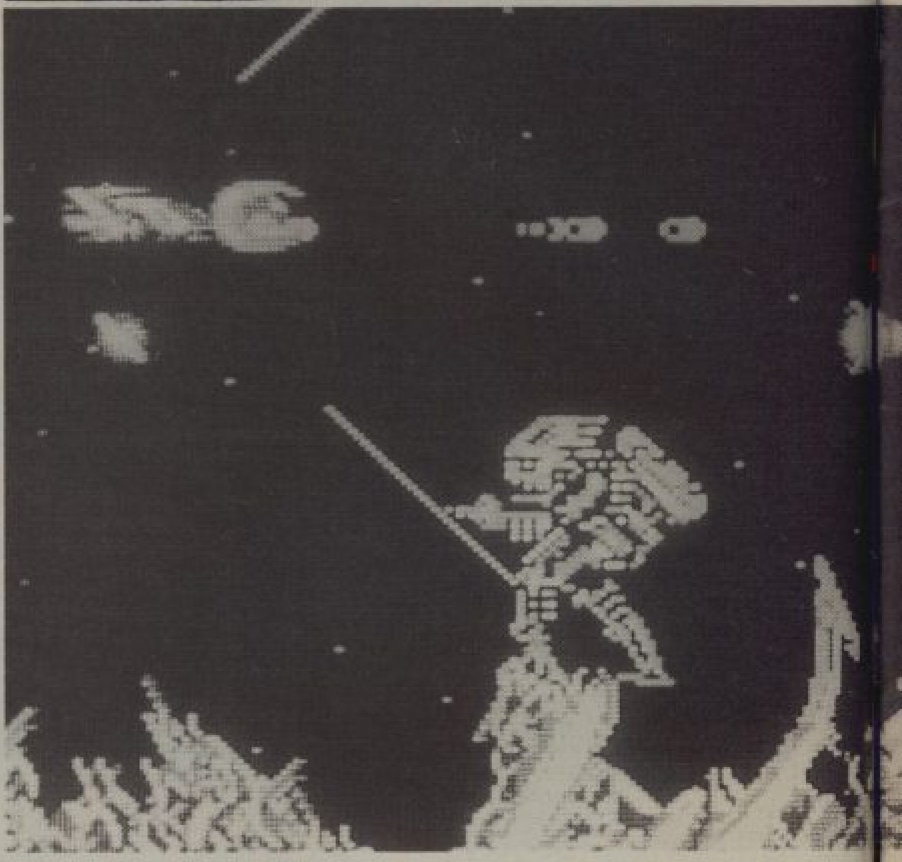
▶ US GOLD
▶ AMIGA £19.99.
▶ C64 DISK £14.99

"Hey-up," you're thinking, "this looks a bit familiar." And well it should do, for in a previous incarnation this was the lawsuit-lumbered *R-Type* "clone *Katakis,* and, hoo-whee, the stories I could tell you about that one, matey! Anyway, after Activision pulled the rug on *Katakis,* US Gold were a bit loath to drop a game which had attracted such rave reviews, so they shipped it back to theprogrammers at Rainbow Arts with instructions to alter it so that it could be rereleased without reviewers like me saying, "Cor blimey, it's *R-Type." Denaris* is the result.

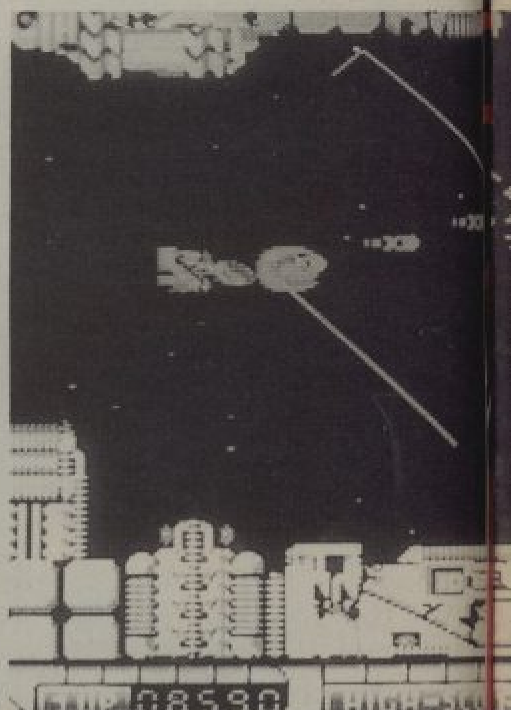
In case you missed the game first time round, here's the gen. You're put in the ejector seat of a heavily-armed space-glider, ouring the surface of the planet Denaris and using your mighty armament to rid it of the nefarious cyborg monstrosities who have recently moved in. It's played in the familiar horizontally-scrolling shoot 'em up format, with the usual extra weapons to bolt on and stonking great monsters to pump laser bolts into at the end of each level. Pretty standard stuff, eh? Nothing yer average legal department could object to there, is there?

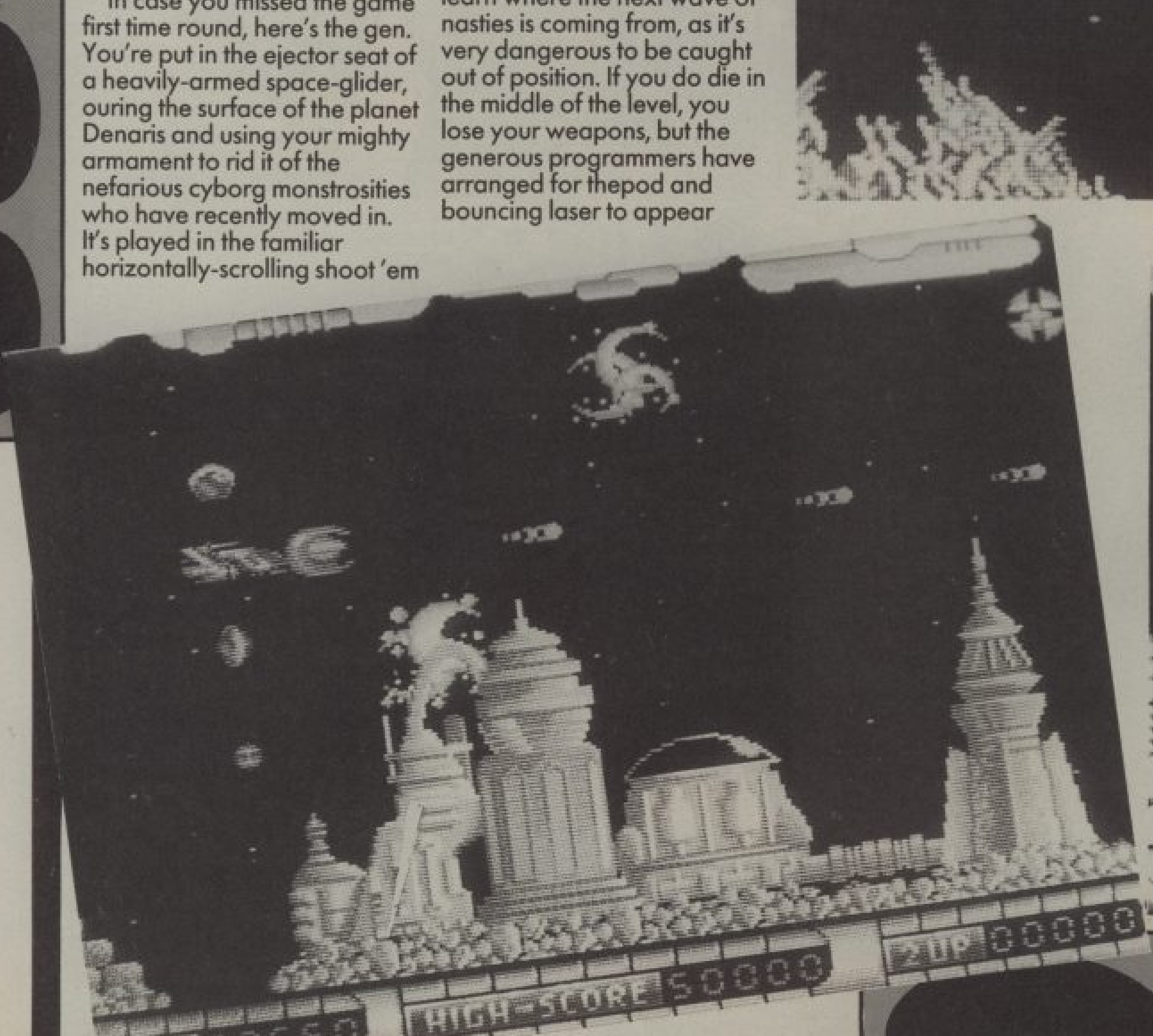
Hmm, well, there are still signs of the game's roots, most notable of which is the weapons pod which you can atch on the front of your ship. But still there are just as many eatures taken out of the original, the most notable of *those* being the lack of a beam-up facility, allowing you to hold down the fire button then release a really powerful shot. Hence, if *Denaris* is going to win friends among the arcade players' fraternity it's going to have to do it more on its own merits than on those of *R-Type.*

Will it succeed? Well, after several days of concentrated play on the Amiga version, I think I can ay that it will. The gameplay is very ast, with a disconcerting number of aliens packing out the screen at all times. *Denaris* is one of those games in which you have to learn where the next wave of nasties is coming from, as it's very dangerous to be caught out of position. If you do die in the middle of the level, you lose your weapons, but the generous programmers have arranged for thepod and bouncing laser to appear



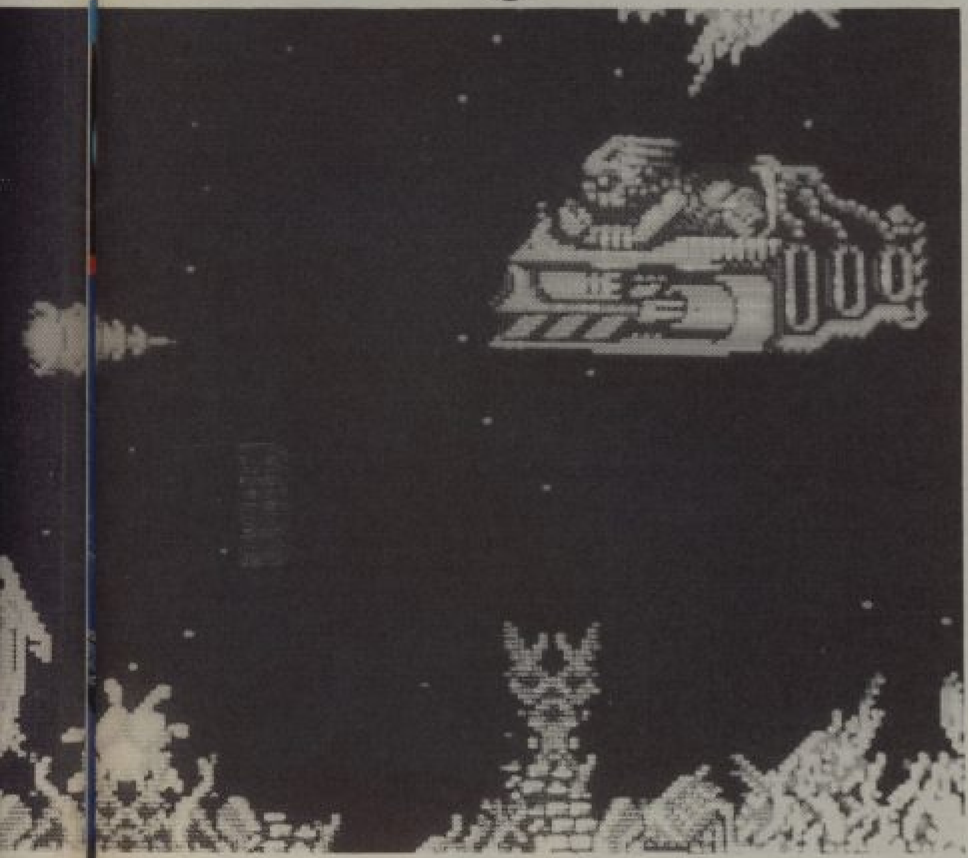
▲ *Denaris — not at all like R-Type.*





▲ *Seven stunning back drops.*

ARIS



almost straight away, which is a big help.

Some of the extra weapons, such as the aforementioned bouncing laser, obviously come from *R-Type,* but *Denaris* makes no attempt to copy the helix or terrain-following lasers, no does the pod behave in the same way.

It's a pity thsere's no pick-up providing rapid fire, as the game is a real thumb-buster, and one which shoul definitely be played with your joystick auto-fire switched on. One item which aused much consternation was the speed-up, which gives your space-glider a hefty kick forward as soon as you collect it — triff and brill, but the sudden loss of control is bad news if you're coming to a solid obstafcle!

Oh, but who am I to gripe about shallow fopperies like these on such a good-looking game? Graphically, *Denaris* is very smart, sporting some slick-looking spacecraft to torch and seven detailed backgrounds to fly over. Not is the in-game sound lacking, for your ears positively ring to a cacophony of blasting noises to keep your nerve endings raw and your trigger finger enraged! Ooh, getting a bit carried away there, but it is rather good in that department. The music isn't bad either, but I wasn't impressed by the end of game tune which sounded like the title theme to a BBC schools programme.

It's probably not a good idea to compare *Denaris* with *R-Type,* because it is much more of a mindless blast, lacing *R-Type's* strategic position 'n' fry gameplay, which the real *R-Type* player lives for.

PAUL GLANCEY

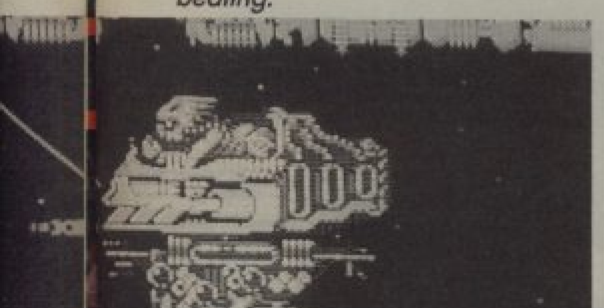
AMIGA

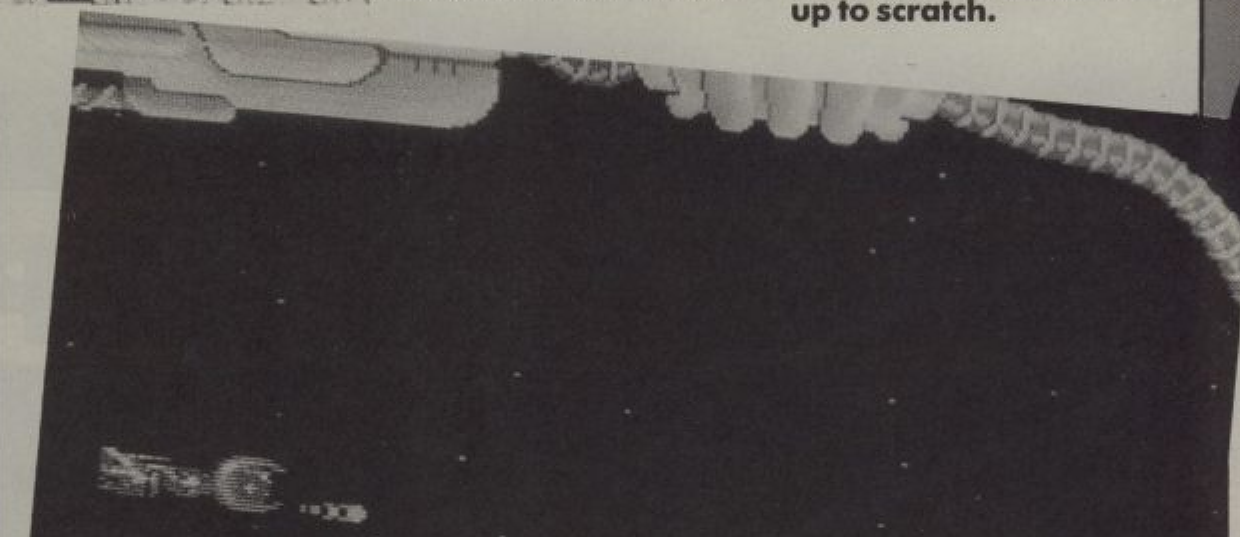
▶ GRAPHICS	83%
▶ SOUND	75%
▶ PLAYABILITY	85%
▶ VALUE	86%
▶ OVERALL	85%

UPDATE

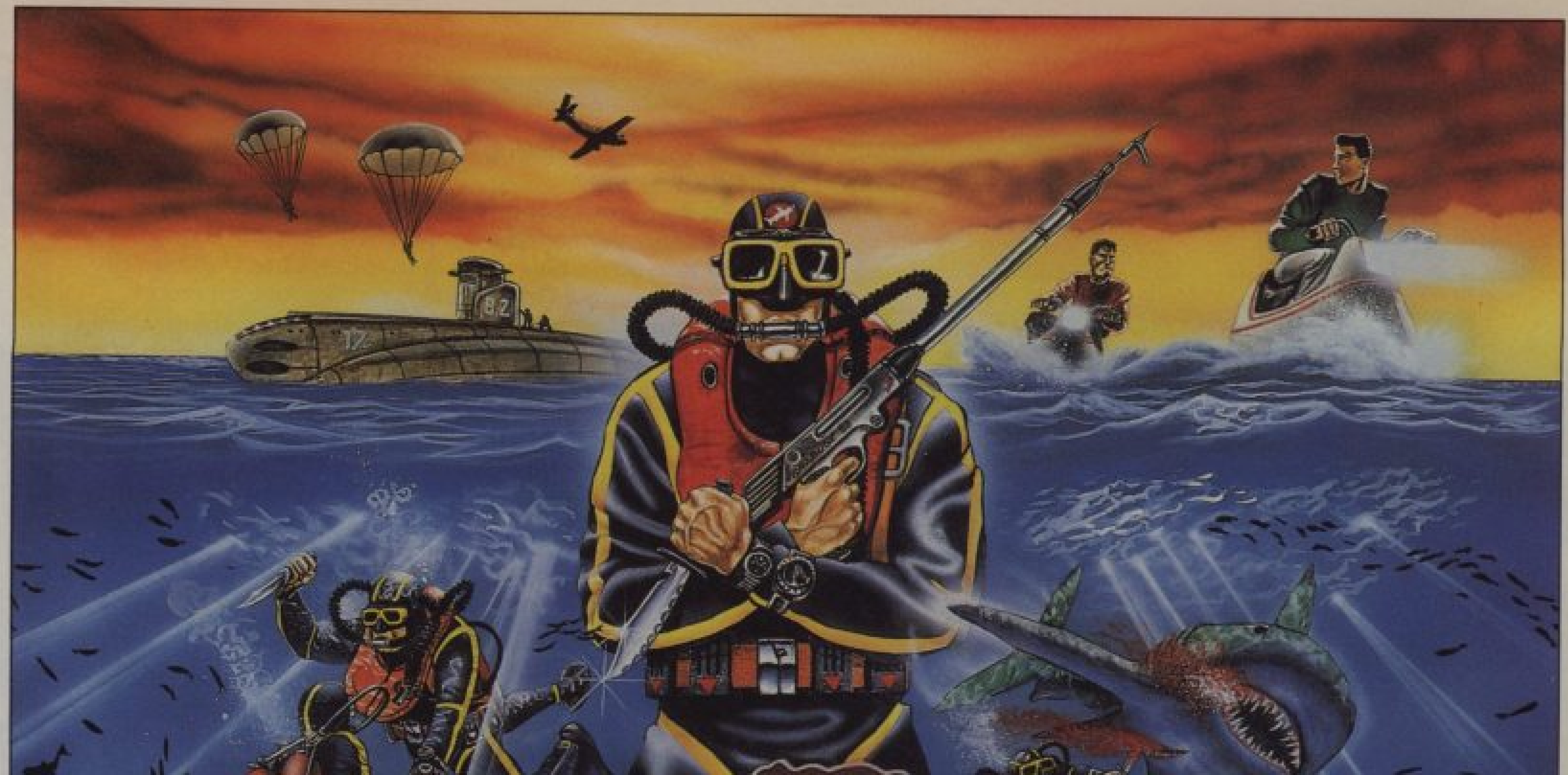
There are no plans for any other versions apart from C64 disk which has twelve levels in comparison to the Amiga's seven. It is up against much stiffer competition on the 64, the market being awash with horizontally-scrolling shoot 'em ups on that machine, but the Rainbow Arts team seem to know what they're doing so the game should be well up to scratch.

▼ *End level nasty — takes a bit of beating.*

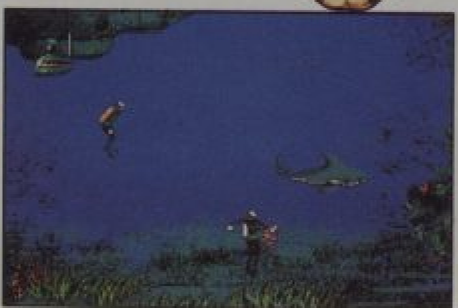


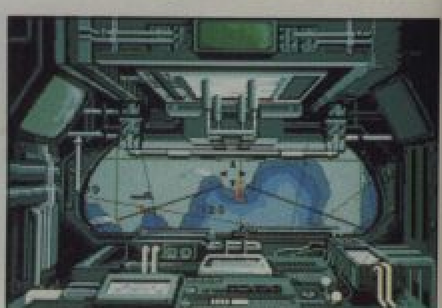


▲ *The robot snake — one of Denaris tougher opponents.*

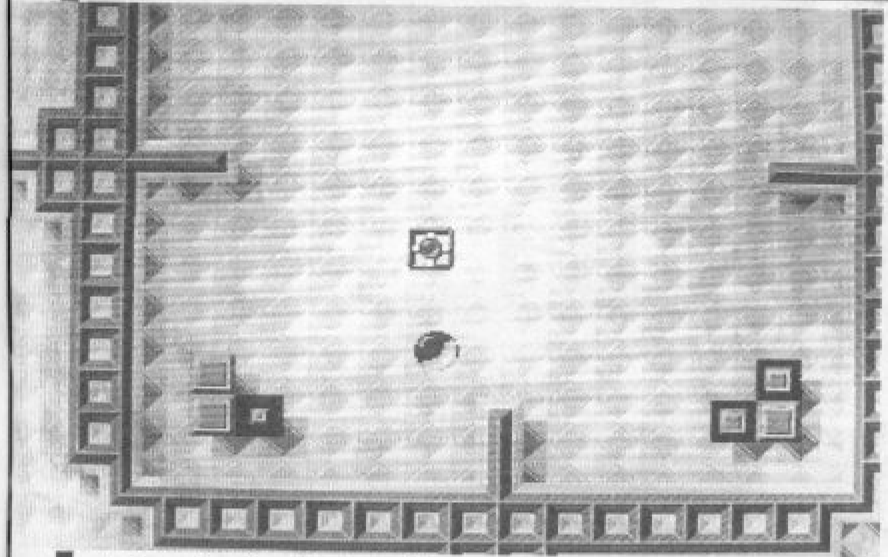


OPERATION NEPTUNE







▲ Four directional Arkanoid clone.

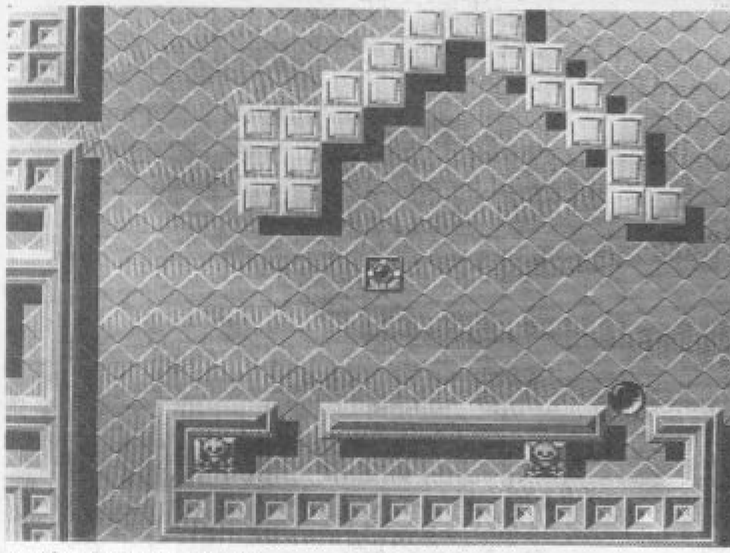
TITAN

▶ **TITUS**
▶ **SPEC CASS £8.99, C64 CASS £9.99, DISK £14.99, AM CASS £9.99, DISK £14.99, ST £19.99, AMIGA PC £24.99.**

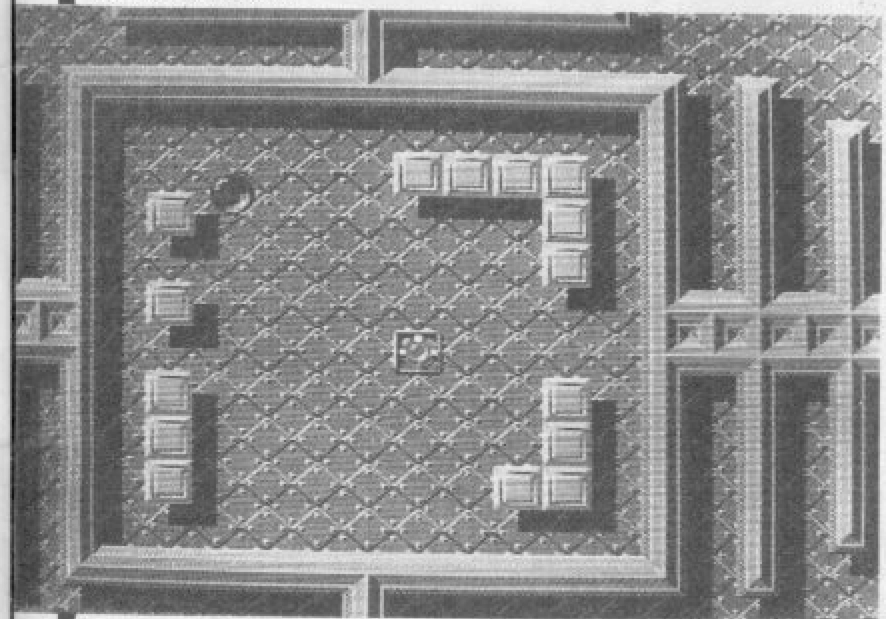
Here's something you don't normally see. An original Titus game. This game is not a rip-off of any recent arcade or popular computer game. In a way it's a bit of a *Breakout* clone, but only in the most basic terms. The sad fact is, it's miles worse than anything else they've ever done.

Titan is almost the exact opposite of what you would think it is from the title. In my mind, the title *Titan* automatically made me think of something very big and imposing, like some hideous alien force about to take over the galaxy. *Titan* is an eight way scrolling *Breakout* variant.

You control a small block set in the middle of the screen which is positioned somewhere within a maze of bricks. Some of the bricks are destructible. Some of the destructible bricks dissappear when you run into them. The other destructible bricks have to be destroyed by other means. What other means? The most innovative game idea ever. You have to hit them with a ball. A ball is normally found banging around somewhere in the maze. You have to bounce the ball off your bat in such a way that it hits the bricks and destroys them. Knock out all the bricks and it's on to the next level.



▲ The skulls spell death.



▼ Patterns change — but gameplay doesn't.

There is only one way that I've come across where you can actually lose a life. Little skulls can be found knocking about on later levels. Should you or the ball touch them, you lose a life. The funny thing is, they don't start to appear until level four, which kind of makes levels one to three a little easy. Easy is too big a word. If I said that I got to level three without actually moving the joystick, I wouldn't be lying.

Graphics are pretty bad on all formats. The screen scrolls at a very fast, smooth rate. This wouldn't be a bad thing were it not for the highly detailed backgrounds, causing quite a bit of eye distress to all who witnessed it. The Amstrad graphics are, funnily enough, way, way better than the Amiga's. At least the Amstrad version has got colour. The Amiga verson is, believe it or not, more or less monochrome.

Sound is blip-blip-blip on the Amstrad and some 'heard it before, probably on another Breakout game' drum samples on the Amiga.

As a game it's far too fast to be playable. Not fast as in joystick wrecking, but fast as in 'help-I-don't-know-what-I'm doing' fast.

Dull, Boring, Badly Programmed, Unplayable, Graphically and Sonically Average. DBBPUGSA. If you take some letters away and change a few, they make the word average. Says it all really.

TONY DILLON

AMSTRAD	
▶ GRAPHICS	68%
▶ SOUND	60%
▶ VALUE	67%
▶ PLAYABILITY	32%
▶ **OVERALL**	**57%**

AMIGA	
▶ GRAPHICS	51%
▶ SOUND	40%
▶ VALUE	29%
▶ PLAYABILITY	32%
▶ **OVERALL**	**37%**

UPDATE

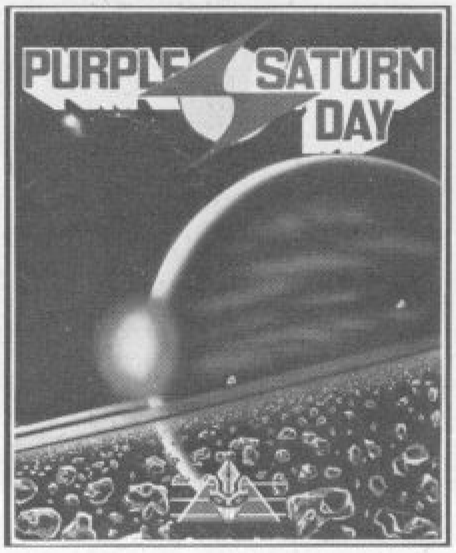
All versions will be on sale in March apart from the Speccy which won't be ready until May.

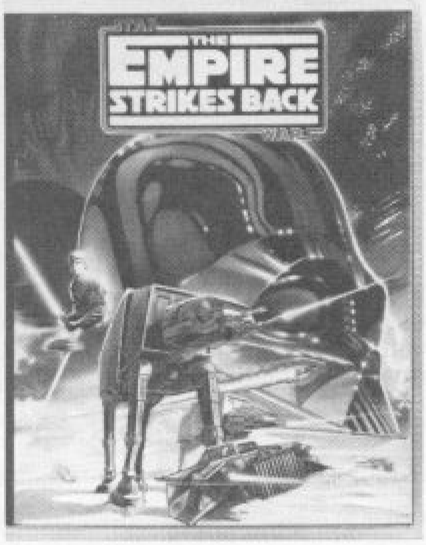
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Reviews

VINDIC

DOMARK
▸ SPEC/AMS/C64 £9.95
▸ CASS, £14.95
▸ DISK, ST/AMIGA £19.95

At the last PC show, Domark pulled off a very neat deal with Tengen, Atari's coin-op division, and secured the rights to five of their newest games: *Xybots, Toobin', Dragon Spirit, APB* and *Vindicators* — which is the first to appear.

The Vindicators coin-op is one of my favourite arcade machines, and I've been waiting for the computer versions to appear in the hope that they're faithful renditions of the original machines. And I'm glad to say that the ST and Amstrad versions definitely are.

The game is set in the far future. The all-powerful Tangent empire is slowly and inexorably conquering the galaxy, and the only thing between them and complete domination are two brave and heroic tank commanders, who have decided to take on the might of the whole empire single-handed.

The Tangent organisation is spread over fourteen different space stations, each one comprised of five levels. The objective is to enter each station and destroy its control centre situated on the fifth level. In the fourteenth station control centre resides the Tangent Boss, a giant squid-like monster that has to be blown away to save the galaxy.

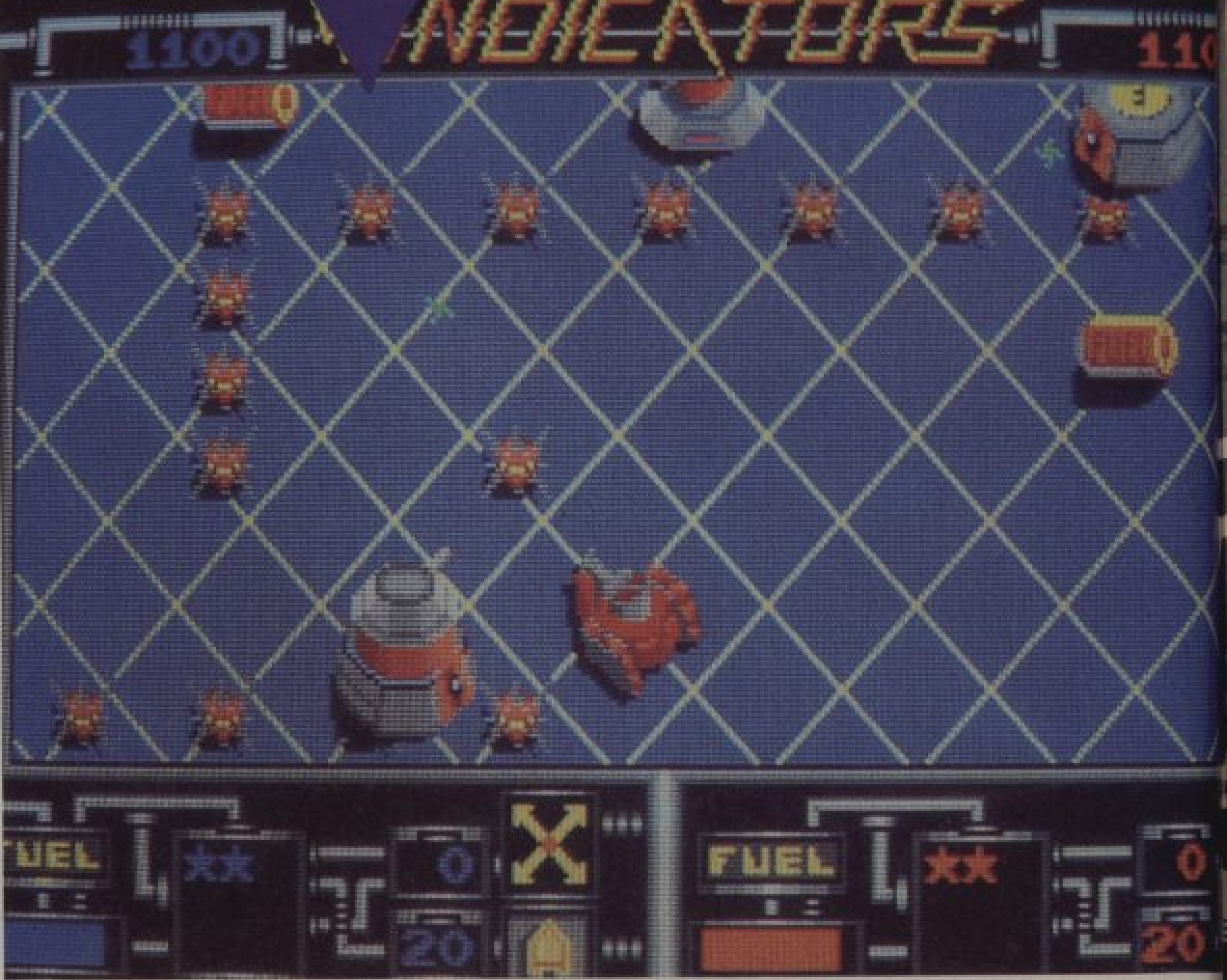
At the start of the mission, one or two-player mode is selected. After that one of three starting levels is chosen, which has an appropriate points and star bonus awarded depending on the difficulty selected. I'll tell you more about stars in a minute.

When a level has been chosen, the action begins. The proceedings are seen in forced perspective 3D, a bit like *Gauntlet*, with the tanks moving up the screen blasting everthing that moves. The screen scrolls vertically, and also horizontally if the play area is wider than the screen.

The stations are all well defended, with gun emplacements and enemy tanks infesting the landscape. All shoot at the intruders and attempt to wear down their fuel is supplies with repeated hits. The tanks can shoot back with their own guns and take out the oposition for points. On later levels super tanks, flying saucers, huge gun emplacements, mines and electical barriers are incorporated into the defence system, making the going very tough indeed.

Stars are found scattered liberally throughout the space station, and can be collected and used to buy extra features for the tank — which are vital if

▼ *A veritable minefield!*



The Amstrad title screen. ▶



CATORS



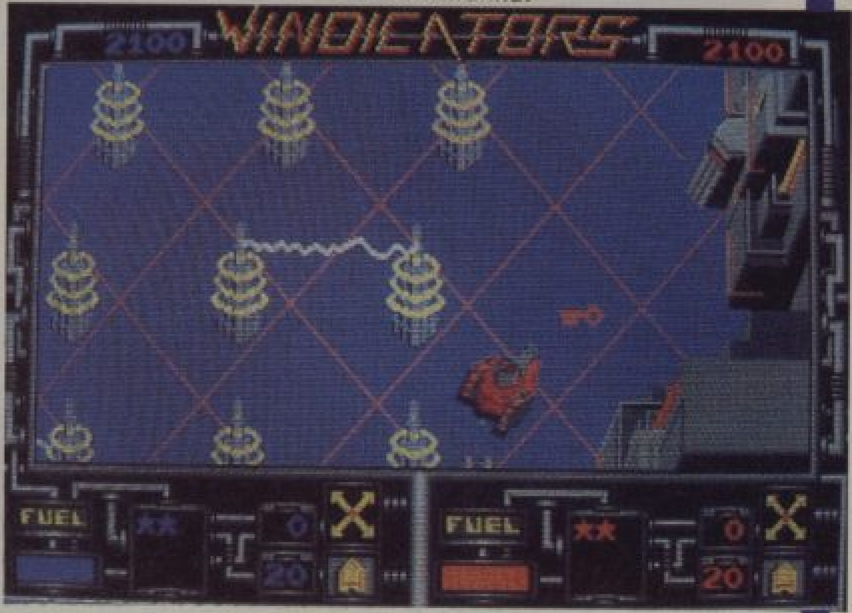
▲ *Boomshanka!*



the mission is to be completed (you can get up to 40 stars if you start on a higher lever).

There are a wide range of power-ups, shields being the most useful. These lessen the effect of a hit — although are themselves depleted, requiring extra shields to be bought when they run out. Extra shot range, extra shot power and speed ups can be bought to increase the ability of the tank, as well as armour plating — the only thing missing is turret rotate, which is impossible to implement on computer.

Homing missiles and bomb cannons are available, a mere five stars for ten of each, and are very useful when you hit strong opposition. Homing missiles whizz around obstacles and corners to hit their target, while bomb cannons are heavy duty shells which decimate everything within the vicinity of its impact zone.



▲ *Pick up the key and go to the exit*

▼ *A single Amstrad tank attacks*



Stars can also buy warps to later levels — and give bonus points into the bargain.

Shields, bomb cannon, homing missiles and extra fuel capsules are also found dotted around the place, and come in very useful when times are tough.

▼ *Heading for the exit . . .*



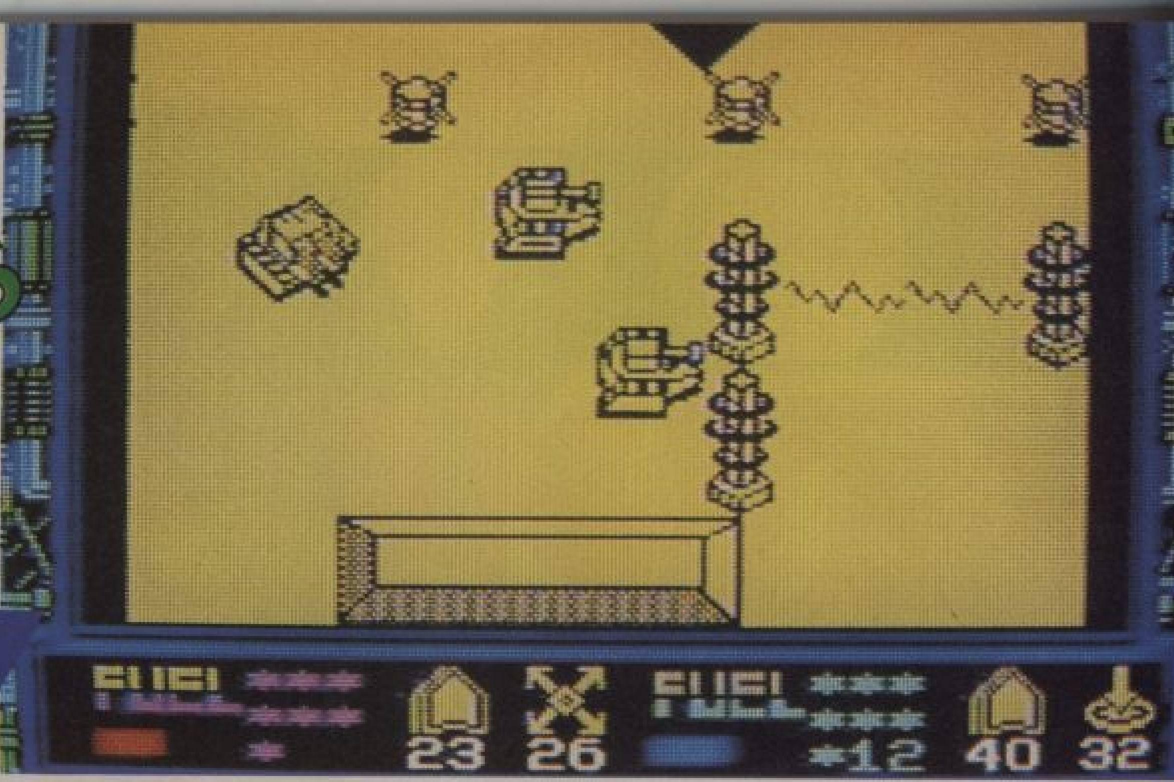


To finish each screen, the tank commanders have to locate either a red or blue key, which open up the exit ports to the next level. So as soon as you've picked up a key, make a bee-line for the exit. When both tanks are safely through, the score gained on that level is displayed, and extra fuel is added in relation to it, so the more you score, the more fuel added to your supply. After that the power-up screen is displayed so the players can buy extra features before the next level begins.

On every fourth level is found the control centre entrance, an orange building which the tanks enter by blasting a hole in the side. Once inside the tanks are given a short time limit to collect any power-up goodies within and beat a hasty retreat to the exit before the whole place explodes.

The multi-limbed Tangent boss lives on the last level, and puts up one hell of a fight as he and the tank commanders slug it out in a final do-or-die confrontation. It's a tough fight, and be prepared for a rather nasty suprise . . .

The ST version of *Vindicators*



VINDICATORS



▲ *The control centre on level three.*



is a stunning copy of the original machine, which looks identical and plays brilliantly. The graphics are first class, and I especially like the massive explosions, which give you a real feeling of destruction. All the sprites are smoothly amimated and finely detailed, and the backdrops are of similar quality.

The gameplay is excellent; it's challenging, tough and very addictive, and the two-player mode adds that competitive edge to increase its lasting appeal.

Amstrad *Vindicators* is also brilliant, with great graphics, sound and playability combining to give one of the best games available on this machine.

If you want a stonking good blast, tank along to your shop and grab *Vindicators.*

JULIAN RIGNALL

ST
- GRAPHICS 88%
- SOUND 86%
- VALUE 80%
- PLAYABILITY 89%
- **OVERALL 87%**

AMSTRAD
- GRAPHICS 86%
- SOUND 81%
- VALUE 81%
- PLAYABILITY 87%
- **OVERALL 85%**

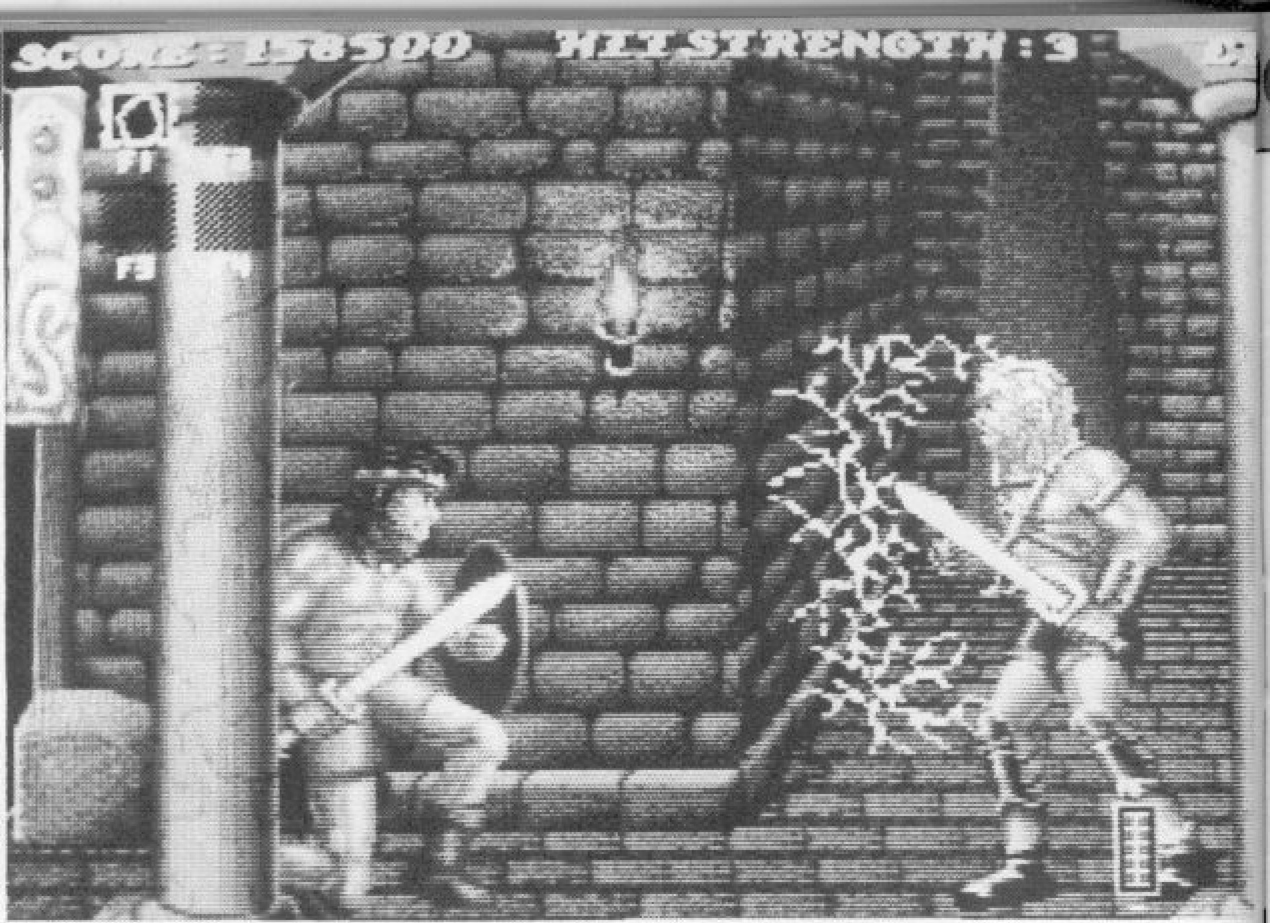
UPDATE

Spectrum, Commodore and Amiga versions should be available by the time you read this. The Amiga incarnation should be the best of the lot, with better graphics and sound and smoother scrolling, while the Spectrum and Commodore versions are expected to retain the playability of the Amstrad version, but have worse and better graphics respectively. NB: BOTH GAMES ARE HITS!



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Reviews



▲ *Sodan features huge characters.*

SWORD OF SO

► **DISCOVERY SOFTWARE**
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Blinking sorcerors! They learn a couple of nasty spells and they just take over the place, transmogrifying people left, right and centre and generally subjugating the populace. Zora is one such magician, whose latest victim happens to be your poor old dad! So, it's time to get the ceremonial sword off the mantlepiece and sally forth to Zora's city, hack your way through his nasty lackies, finally to enter his fortress, Castle Craggamoor and do battle with the man himself, thus avenging the death of your father.


▲ *The biggest bad dude of all — fills the screen.*

Sword of Sodan is a hack and slay arcade game in the grandest of styles. You start the game by selecting either a male or a female warrior as your on-screen persona — (they have identical fighting abilities), then BOOMSHANKA, there you are outside the walls of the city. Have a quick look at the map to check where you are, then you're off.

Your repertoir of fighting manoeuvres is limited to high, middle and low swings — no *Barbarian*-style flying neck chops, unfortunately — and being a lithe young barbarian, you can evade blows by leaping and ducking. Each enemy you come across has a small energy bar at his feet, and each hit you manage to score knocks pixels off the bar, until it disappears completely and your enemy keels over, dead. Your warrior is similarly equipped with an energy bar, as well as a supply of lives which can be replenished by picking up items left behind by recently deceased enemies.

The little old man with his deadly web. ►



Other collectables include Magic Zappers (essentially smart bombs), magic shield and increased hit strength. You can hold up to four extras at once and activate them individually using the function keys. The extras have to be used judiciously, as certain nasties, particularly the magic-users on the later levels, cannot be beaten without help.

Zora's hench-beings come in numerous forms, starting off as lance-wielding soldiers, then armoroured axe men, followed by club-bearing giants. As you approach the castle, you're faced with scorpion-lizards, vomit-spitting ghouls and, in the castle, wizards who fire lightning bolts at you.

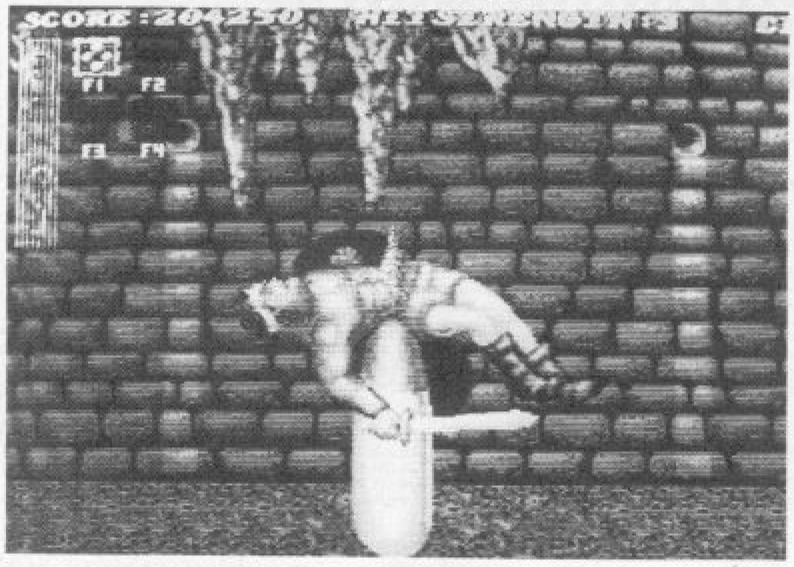
Some of the scenery is just as dangerous. Level two is played on a wooden bridge which has mental spikes popping through it at regular intervals. Even

larger spikes make an appearance on level six, accompanied by lava balls which scoot along the ground, stone columns which drop down from the ceiling and moving stepping stones which cross pits of flame.

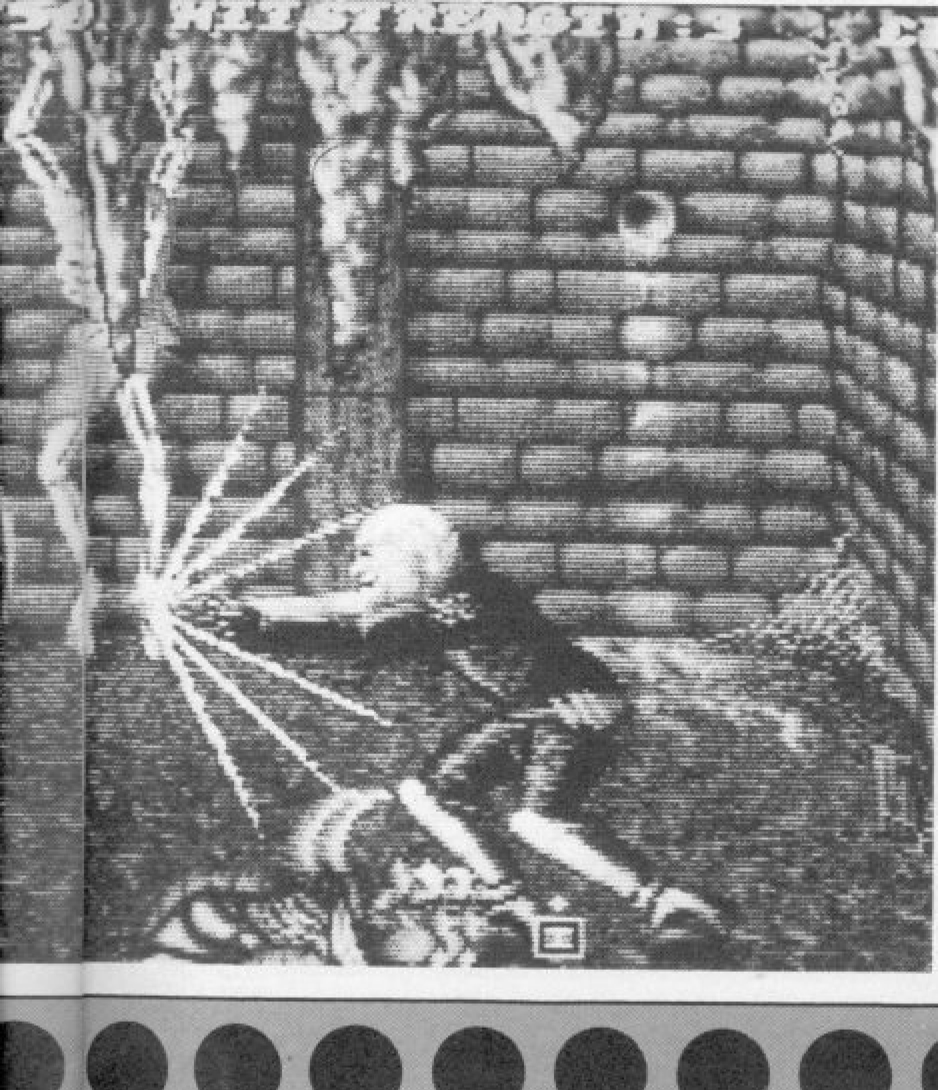
Getting caught out by one of the spikes is pretty impressive visually — the screen shows the barbarian being impaled through the chest! There are other gory touches throughout the game, the most spectacular one that I've seen being the decapitation of the giant at the end of level three. There are also bloody spurts accompanying succesful sword blows, and sampled moans from dying solidiers.

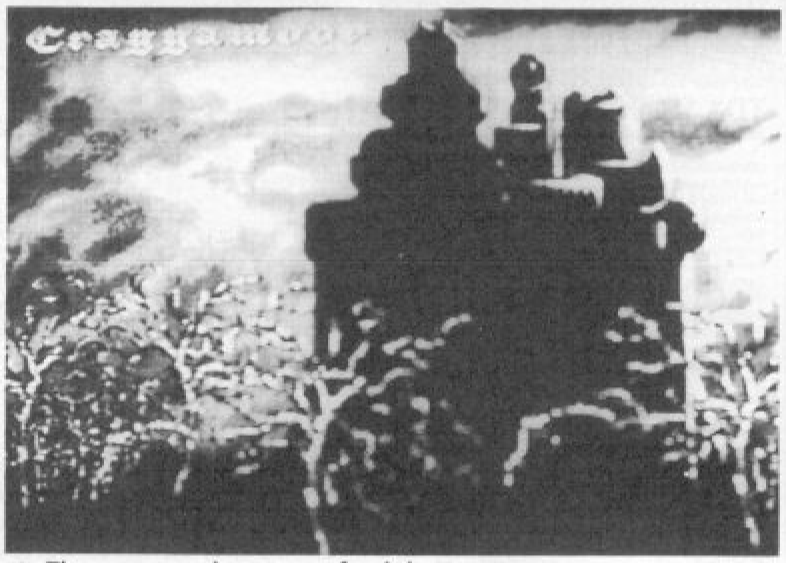
Indeed, the Amiga's sound and graphics capabilities are used very well throughout, the former being put to work on excellent music, sampled sounds and vocal hints, and the latter producing huge, colourful sprites and lovely,

▼ *Ouch — a spike gets Glancey from below.*



ODAN





▲ *The eerie castle — your final destination.*

parallax — scrolling backgrounds. The animation is slightly ropey, but I'm a tolerant sort of bloke, and it soon became unnoticeable.

There are one or two gameplay bugbears that I would gripe about, though. The main one is the length of some of the early levels, which, once mastered, take no time at all to complete. The short playing time is offset by lengthy pauses between stages, during which the next part of the game loads from disk, the map is displayed, and you're given a piece of poetry describing the way ahead. All fine the first time around, but when you've played a few games and are keen to get on, it becomes a bit of a pain.

My other complaint is specifically to do with the traps which appear on level six. These take the form of pits which appear out of nowhere, swallowing your warrior before you get a chance to take any kind of evasive action.

Apart from these two things, I was well pleased with *Sword of Sodan*. It's not a complicated game, nor is it terribly difficult to play (things don't get difficult until level eight). I doubt whether it's worthy of the title, "best Amiga beat 'em up" — *IK +* is a more pure example of expertly-digitised violence — but it's variety kept me at the joystick, and I'll stick with it until the end is in sight. Real case-hardened warriors may find they finish it before they've had their £25 worth, but anyone in the market for a playable, visually and sonically impressive game would do well to check this out.

PAUL GLANCEY

AMIGA	
▲ GRAPHICS:	86%
▲ SOUND:	89%
▲ PLAYABILITY:	83%
▲ VALUE:	79%
▲ **OVERALL:**	**85%**

UPDATE

There are vague plans for the ST and C64 version of Sodan, but don't expect them for at least six months.

C+VG HIT!

▼ *Serpents of the trees.*



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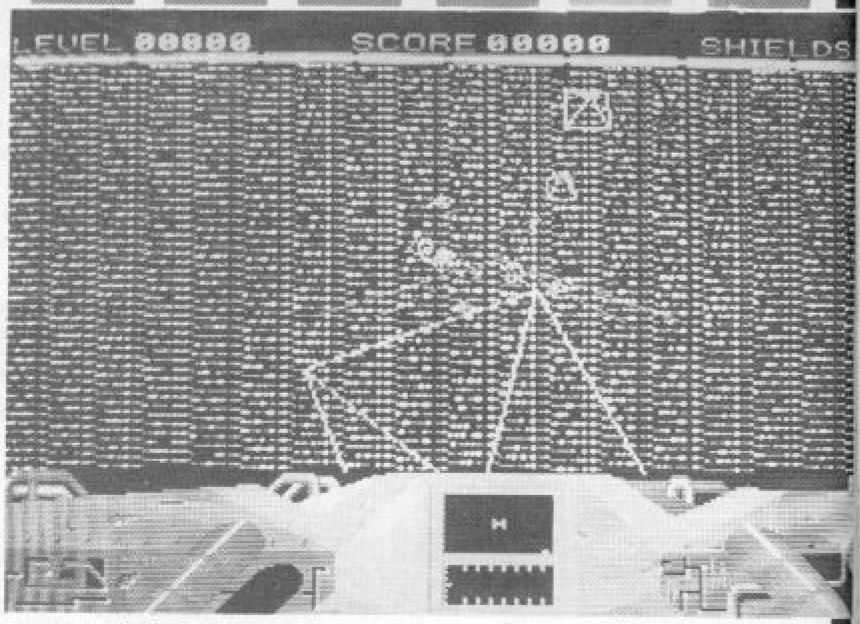
What is it with beautiful Princesses? They're always getting themselves kidnapped aren't they? And then some poor old hero has to risk his neck going to her rescue. Well, guess that's happened in Mastertronic's latest 16-bit budget title. A Princess has been abducted and a hero is required to save her bacon. And that hero is you, and the Princess in question is Chardonnay.

The game is set a few millenia in the future, so instead of going out to rescue her on a trusty steed, the hero thunders off in a fab 'n' groovy rocket ship. The evil swines who're currently holding the Princess captive are the Disgusmatrons, and they have all sorts of horrible and nasty things to do to her ... So you'd better get your skates on, buddy!

The mission of mercy isn't a straightforward nip in, nip out affair, and involves negotiating the deadly Disgusmatrons' defence devices. There are four basic hazards to get through, before reaching the second wave of defences, which are even tougher.

First up is a chase through a densely-packed asteroid field. The action is viewed in vector graphic 3D, and the objective is to whizz through the boulder-strewn spaceways and blast five Disgusmatron spaceships. These blue craft appear one at a time and are simply blown away with one well-aimed blast of laser fire.

After that comes a leisurely scoot across a planet surface. The idea is to guide the ship through a series of gates, which sounds easy enough, but unfortunately the ship's speed can't be regulated and sometimes it's impossible to fly left or right far enough to get through the next gate. Like the last level, hitting anything results in the loss of one of the ship's ten shields.



▲ *Kerr-rash, bank, opps.*

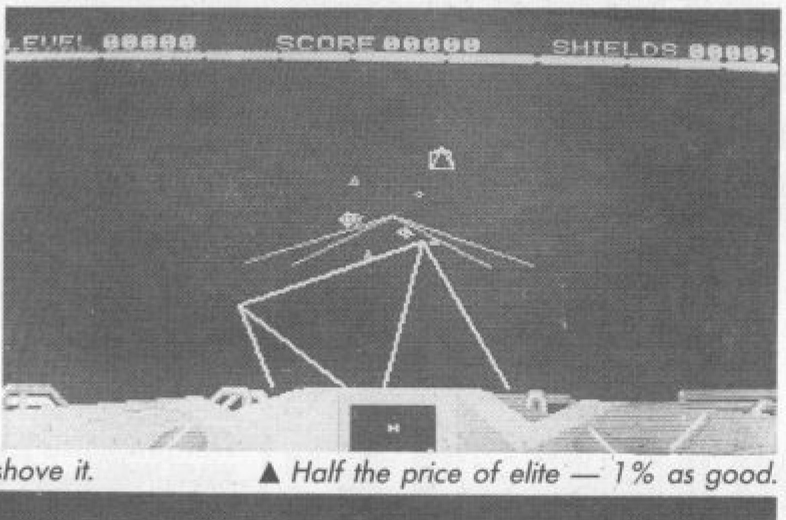
The third level is a hyperspace jump, where the hero flies the ship through a long tunnel made up of squares. Fly through the squares and everything is Ok. Fly outside and it's curtains!

Finally, the ship zooms down a tunnel, avoiding oncoming obstacles and blasting Disgusmatron ships. When five have been totalled, the game returns to the first level, only it's harder.

In principle, *Chase* sounds like it might be quite a neat little budget game, but unfortunately it's lacking in many areas. The four levels are very simplistic, and annoying quirks like the lack of a speed control on level two and Disgusmatron ships that seem to be flying outside the tunnel on the last level are very annoying.

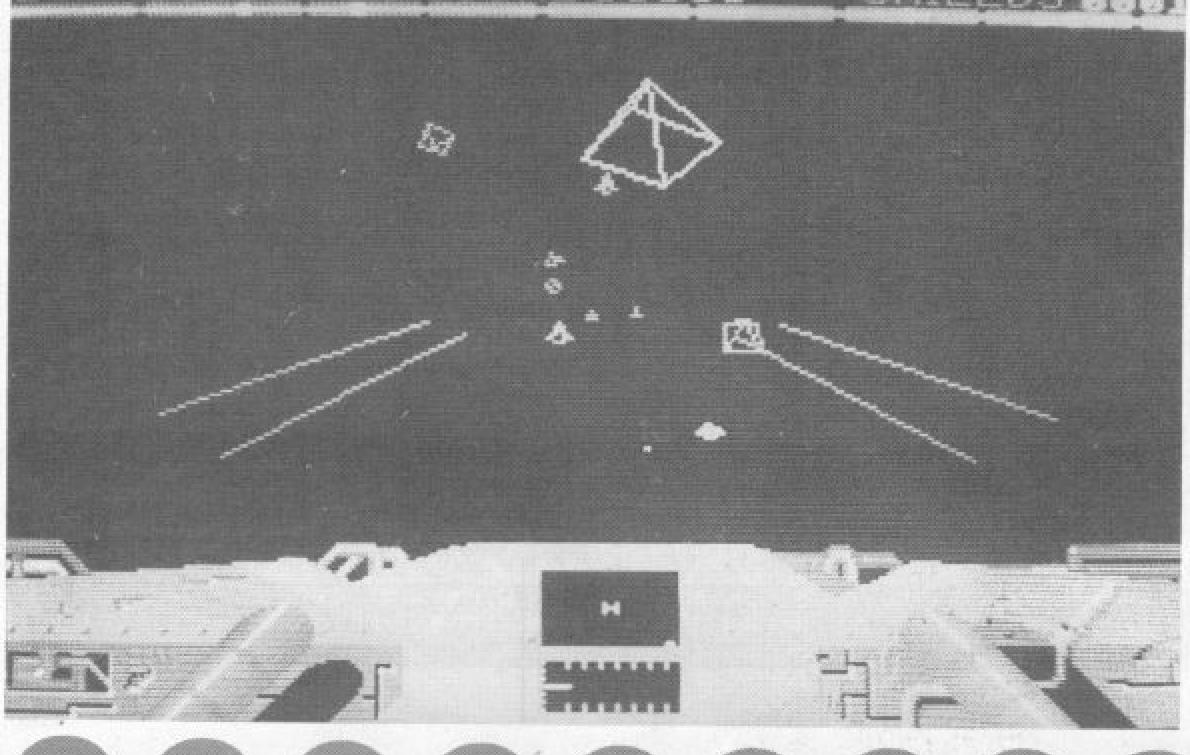
The gameplay is limited, and once you've been round the levels it all gets boring. The vector graphics are smooth and fast, and the 3D update convincing, especially in the tunnel sequence, but in the end they're wasted on what's an ultimately shallow and tedious game.

JULIAN RIGNALL



▲ *Half the price of elite — 1% as good.*

▼ *If this is 16 bit budget — shove it.*



ST	
GRAPHICS	67%
SOUND	54%
VALUE	42%
PLAYABILITY	43%
OVERALL	**43%**

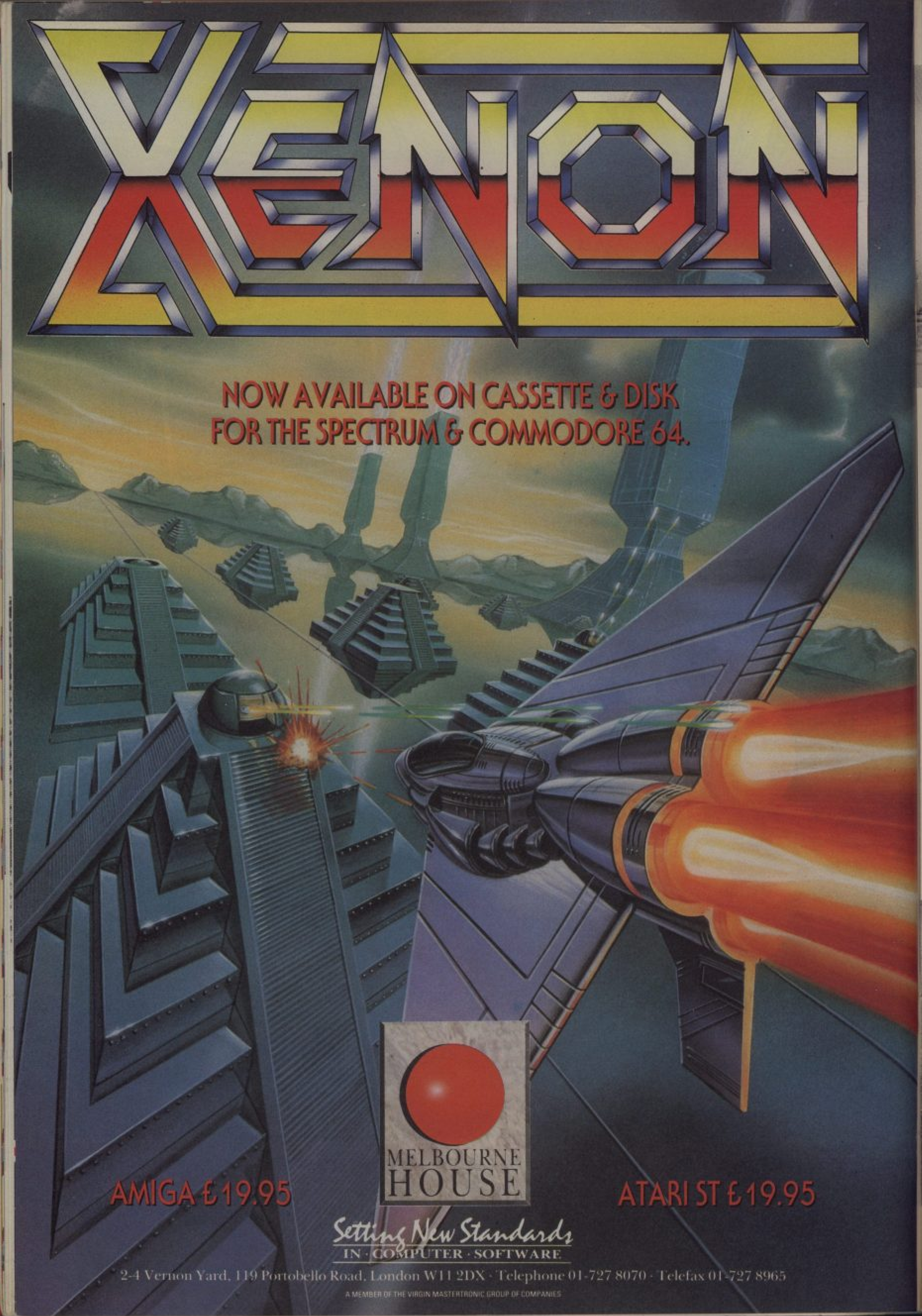
AMIGA	
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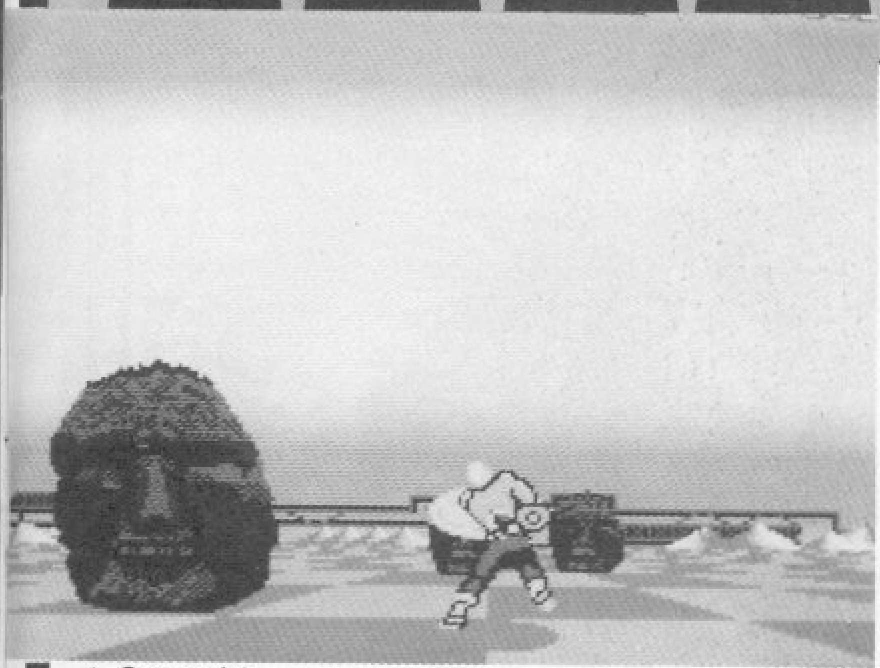
UPDATE

No other versions are planned.


VINDI
Vindicators is a faithful conversion of the popular Coin-Op Arcade hit.
The year is 2525. An armada of fourteen alien space stations approach Earth. Its posture, hostile. Long-range scanners indicate that a direct attack would be useless against the vessels' heavy exterior armor. The only way to destroy the invading force is to infiltrate the enemy with your SR-88 Strategic Battle Tanks, better known as Vindicators.
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SPACE HARRIER

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Space Harrier was one of the first Sega sit down and ride as you blast games.

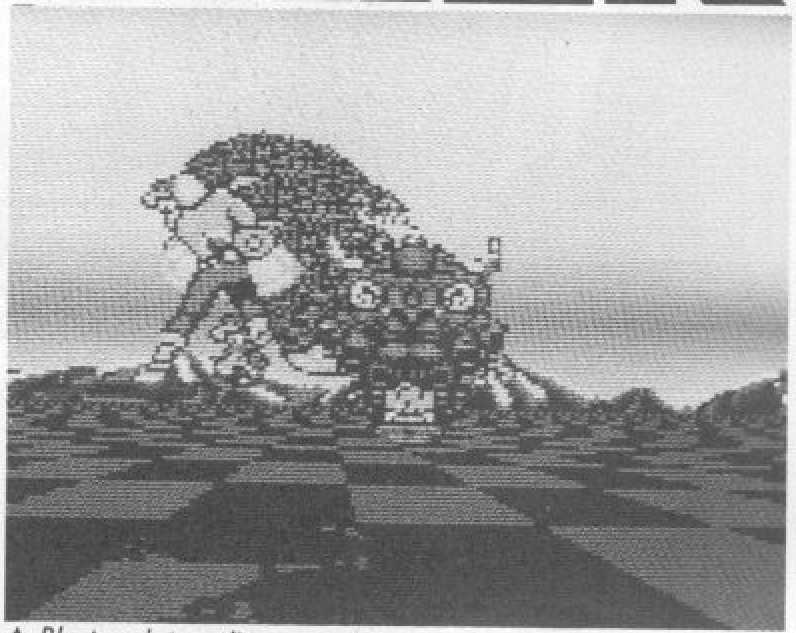
It shook up the arcades as much as the players who played it, as the hydraulically driven coin-op didn't come cheap. An upright stand and play version of Space Harrier soon followed and the game became one of the monster arcade hits of '86. Sega quickly realised that they were onto something with hydraulics and spectacular 3D graphics — following up *Space Harrier* with classics like *Afterburner, Out Run, and Thunderblade.*

Elite grabbed the home rights to *Space Harrier* and carved out a reputation as the leading coin-op converter of the time.

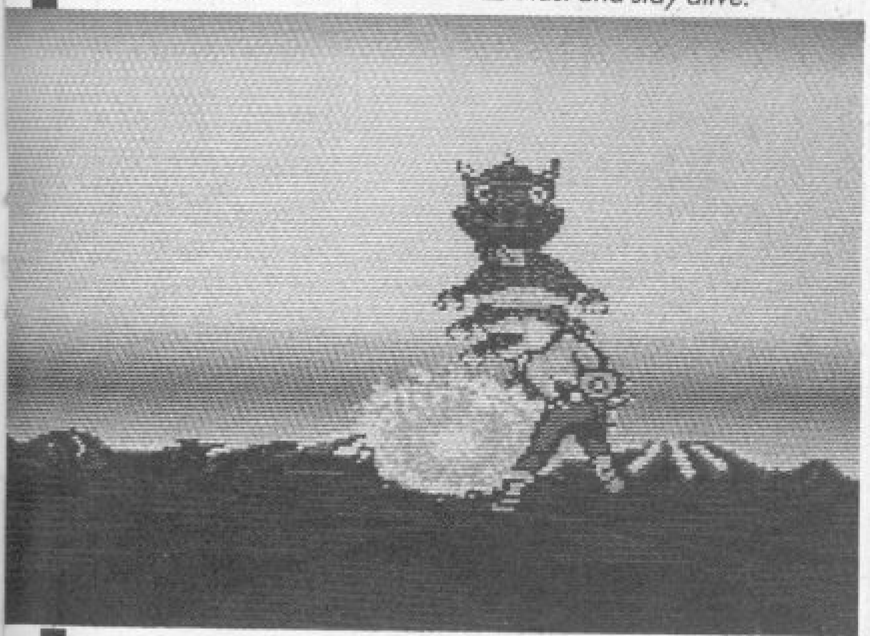
Three years on and the 16-bit versions arrive. Will they still thrill the way their predecessors did or will they appear too simplistic for ST and Amiga gamers?

The first thing you notice about the Amiga version is that it fills the whole screen. No tiny postage stamp-sized window through which you view the play. The 3D effect is so much more effective as a result of filling the screen — you really feel like you are flying.

Space Harrier is a very simple 3D shoot 'em up. Get as far as you can, destroy as much as possible on the way, and see if you can stay in the air as the game accelerates.



▲ *Blast and stay alive.*



It either works or fails on the quality of its 3D routine and its speed. For these reasons people scoffed when Elite attempted to code it on 8-bit machines. Those people lived to eat their words then and any honest opinion of this version has to be that it is an excellent conversion.

The speed and the slight feeling of air sickness are all there as your hero jet-packs his way around the screen with his heavy laser resting in his arms.

The simplicity of Space Harrier is emphasised when you read the story line. All you are told is that the Dragon land is occupied by "barbaric and evil creatures" and you (the Space Harrier) enter into "mortal combat" with these "aliens of another planet."

Basically — just jump into the air as the machine yells "get ready" and start blasting.

Just speed on the trigger and nifty manoeuvreing of your character are what is required to dodge the aliens.

At the end of each level is a nasty — the first one being a giant dragon recquiring segment by segment destruction of its ugly, writhing torso.

Later you come up against giant robots — and still more dragons. There are no real rules with Space Harrier — which is one reason I am so keen on it. It is an entirely unpretentious computer game full of weird and wacky nasties.

Altogether you have ten levels to deal with in this Amiga version — the same as the ST. They get tougher as you go — speeding up — so that it is going to take you quite a while to clock it.

Space Harrier fans will be well pleased with the 16-bit versions.

Eugene Lacey

AMIGA	
▶ GRAPHICS	81%
▶ SOUND	70%
▶ VALUE	80%
▶ PLAYABILITY	83%
▶ **OVERALL**	**82%**

Update

C64, Spectrum, and Amstrad versions of Space Harrier are available on Elite compilations. They will also be out on the budget Encore label at £2.99 — though probably not until next year. ST and Amiga versions are now in the shops and a PC version will be launched later in the year.


Born in the USA
American Ice Hockey
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Reviews

HYBRIS

► **SUPPLIER: DISCOVERY**
► **PRICE: AMIGA, ST AND IBM — ALL £24.99**

Those of you who own a 16-bit machine and have spent the last year decrying the lack of a good shoot 'em up are about to be silenced for good — as Gainstar's import of this ace Discovery blaster is all set to melt your screens in a veritable explosion of scrolling mayhem.

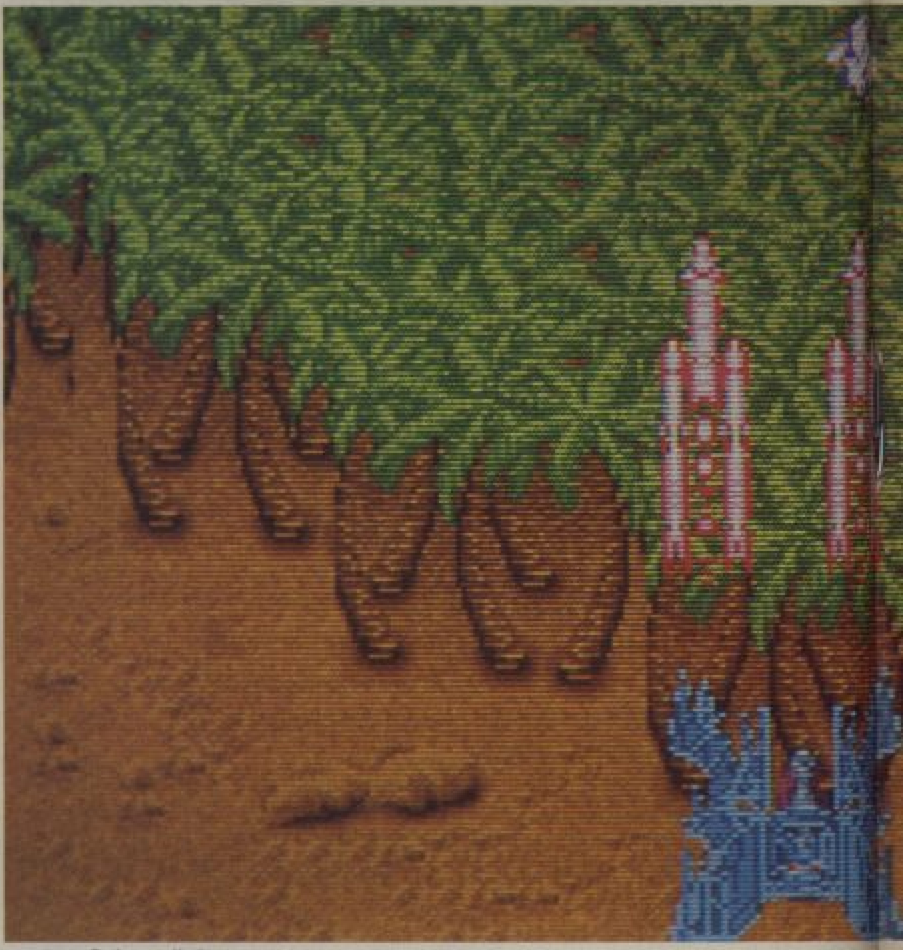
So what's so special about this one? Especially as it makes absolutely no claims about 'stretching the machine's capabilities' or providing 'blasting action with a subtle twist'. The answer lies in the playability, which has been pitched to the point of perfection and has had everyone who's played the game in the office hooked from the first attempt.

After you've chosen to be either commander Maverick or Lovett (this makes no difference to the gameplay, but in case you're interested Lovett's a member of the fairer sex) your ship is launched onto a semi-tropical landscape.

At this point two things happen: a pulsating soundtrack bursts into life and you're immediately set upon by the first of many flying and shooting aliens, backed up by ground-based weapons installations.

Although there are only three levels to be negotiated (the second is watery and the third appears to take place above the internal organs of some massive monster), they're all quite long and take some time to complete . . . but not if you stick with the standard weapons system.

Weapon upgrades appear at regular intervals in the form of numbered icons (wait for it — one to five), and when the complete set has been gathered up your ship will be



▲ *Fire flak in all directions.*



▼ *Fully tooled up for the end screen nasty.*







▲ *Split your ship to spread the flak.*



▲ *Power up No. 2 ??? comes into view.*

as close as it's possible to get to indestructible.

Good and all as the extra weapons are, they can be improved further by a neat little trick: simply spin the joystick rapidly and the weapon 'expands' to reveal even more destructive powers. Three expansions are allowed per weapon, and if you've forgotten how many times you've already used this trick there are three 'E' icons at the top of the screen to remind you.

Because the action is so hot, you'd be forgiven if the presentation was a little naff — but it's far from it. There's an impressive high score table, a rolling demo (including self portraits by the programmers?!?) and an options screen which allows almost all of the games parameters to be altered. This last item can be abused however and can make the game far too easy if taken to extremes.

The only really naff thing that I could find was the occasional appearance of totally unsuitable sprites (such as the banana's that can be collected for a bonus of 5,000 points), but that's such a minor detail that I'm almost sorry I mentioned it. Hybris is quite simply the answer to the 16-bit shoot 'em up fans' prayers.

CIARAN BRENNAN

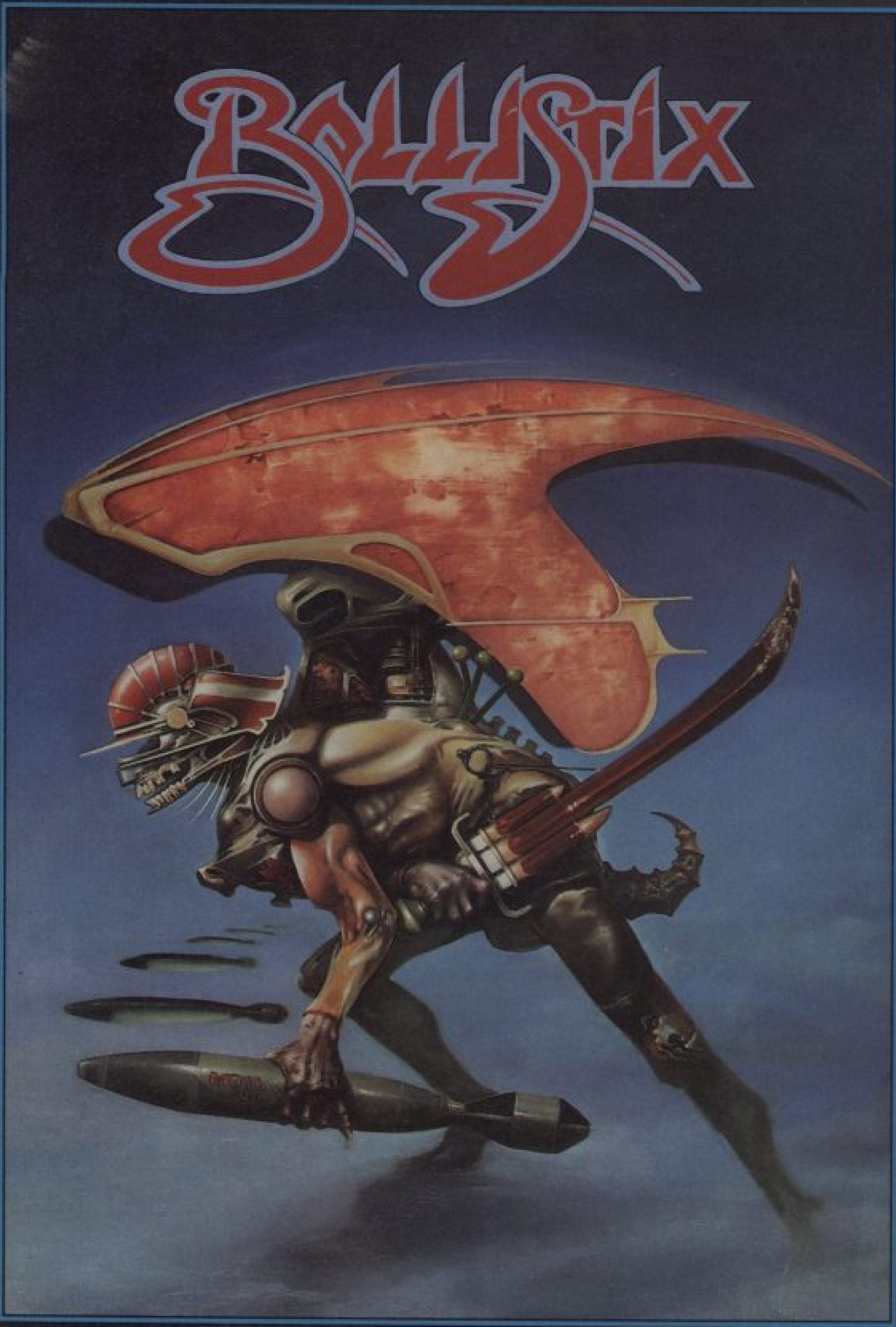
▼ *Nice congratulatory screen.*

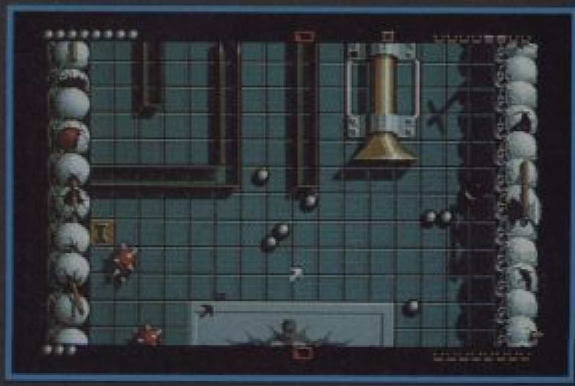


AMIGA	
GRAPHICS	78%
SOUND	82%
VALUE	78%
PLAYABILITY	94%
OVERALL	**90%**

UPDATE

IBM and ST owners don't have too long to wait to start their own drive through the Hybris scrolling landscape, as both are just reaching their final stages of development and should be available soon after you read this. As far as PC graphics go, it's still uncertain as to whether EGA or VGA graphics cards will be supported.











BALLISTIX
Its a whole new ball game!

Sick of silly old soccer ? Tired of pathetic pinball? Then you need a dose of *Ballistix* - the fastest, wackiest, toughest ball game yet to appear on a computer.*Ballistix* just explodes with excitement, puzzles and an amazing **130 different screens** of frenetic action.

The aim of the game is simple; score more goals than your opponent to win the match. Doing it is a different matter as **splitters** fill the screen with dozens of balls, **tunnels** hide them from view, **bumpers** bounce balls all over the show, fiendish **red arrows** speed them up to almost impossible velocity, **magnets** pull them away from your control, and much, much more.

Ballistix is incredibly flexible, too. You can play against the computer or another player, set the speed if you can't stand the pace, define where the balls are fired and their velocity, rack up bonuses that will get you extra goals and then, at the end of an exhausting game, set your name in pride of place on the high-score table. And it's all played to the accompaniment of a throbbing sound-track and a crowd that applauds your every goal.

Ballistix is definitely not a game for wimps. It's tough, fast, challenging and incredibly competitive - in fact, it's just the kind of game you like.

Two joysticks required for two-player game

ATARI ST/AMIGA - £19.95

Screen shots taken from the Amiga version.

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BIG Screen

Good films, bad films — twin sides of the coin . . . and only Ward R Street can tell them apart.

Stop me if you've heard this. A man stumbles into a police station. "I'd like to report a murder," he says. "Who's the victim?" the desk sergeant asks. "I am" gasps the man.

It sounds like a joke but for Dennis Quaid it's deadly serious. The university lecturer has just discovered he's **DOA — Dead On Arrival** (15). A slow acting poison gives him just twenty four hours to find out who has killed him and why.

Quaid isn't having a good time. One of his highly talented but highly strung students takes a suicidal dive right by his window. His wife gets her head split open by an unseen intruder. And when Quaid decides the murderer is another student, daffy Meg Ryan (Inner Space), he superglues her hand to his wrist so she can't escape. Well, maybe it's not all bad!

Together they escape from the police, who have made Quaid number one suspect for his wife's murder, and set out to find the real killer. While the plot, based on a 1943 thriller, doesn't stand up to much investigation, the cast is good and the direction, by the people who brought us Max Headroom, is stylishly sombre. DOA is alive and kicking.

I'd rather be in the dead of night than rising to a **Tequila Sunrise.** This promisingly exotic cocktail of a thriller ends up a simple cock up!

It's another odd couple cop movie, in which Kurt Russell is a police officer and Mel Gibson plays his former friend, a coke dealer trying to go straight. The two are brought back into uncomfortably close contact when Russell is ordered to trap a major drug trafficker colleague of Gibson's.

The third ingredient in the brew is Michelle Pfeiffer as the restaurant owner whose affections sway between them. Should she date dope dealing Mel or is clean cut Kurt just courting her because she's a source of information.

If the plot sounds familiar it's because a similar set-up appeared in Extreme Prejudice, an absurdly violent thriller last year. Tequila Sunrise is far more intelligent, but it spends so much time staring into the bottom of its glass you may end up wishing for some good old pyrotechnics to alleviate the boredom.

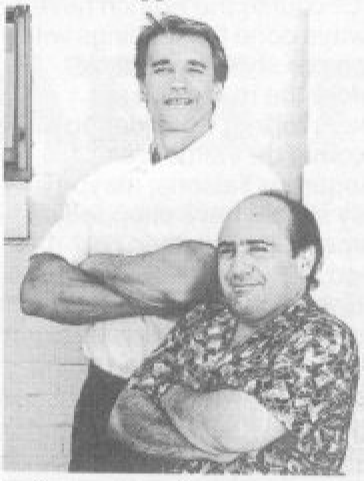


▲ *The man on the right has 24 hours to live. He is D.O.A.*

For an even unlikelier teaming try **Twins** (PG), featuring those identical actors Arnold Schwarzenegger and Danny DeVito. (Arnold's slightly taller if you have problems telling them apart).

Naturally nature couldn't nurture such an inspired pairing — the unlikely brothers are products of a genetic experiment to create a super-being. But instead of one baby it produced two — and guess who drew the dregs?

▼ *Weird twins — DeVito and Schwarzenegger.*





▲ *Working Girl — girly career antics.*

While Arnie, the Apollo, grew up in a tropical paradise, thousands of miles from civilization, dwarfish DeVito sweltered in the sweat box of life, becoming a small time hustler with big time debts and even bigger guys after his hide. Luckily Arnold is bigger than anybody and he choses this moment to turn up on his twin's doorstep.

Unfortunately for Twins there are two pairs of writers credited for the script. While the scenes between Schwarzenegger, showing he has a talent to do more than flex his muscles and snarl, and DeVito as deliciously sleazy as ever, are often funny, there's a ridiculous thriller plot which detracts from the characters and drags along at a snails pace. Perhaps they should have made two movies from Twins!

Working Girl (15) is every bit as fanciful, though it concerns two women. Melanie Griffith (Something Wild) is the ambitious secretary while Sigourney Weaver takes time off from those Gorillas in the Mist to be her boss. What follows is pure Cinderalla!

On a skiing holiday. Weaver breaks her leg so Melanie takes the opportunity to put a few of her own executive schemes into operation. Her innocent accomplice in the million dollar deal is Prince Charming himself, Harrison Ford, who finds himself falling for Melanie's plan . . . and then for Melanie.

But inevitably things go wrong when Sigourney returns to uncover her secretary's ambitions — meanwhile Melanie discovers that handsone Harrison is her boss's beau! The bitchy boardroom battle that ensues means that one working girl loses her job. While it doesn't always work, Working Girl is still a neat little comedy.

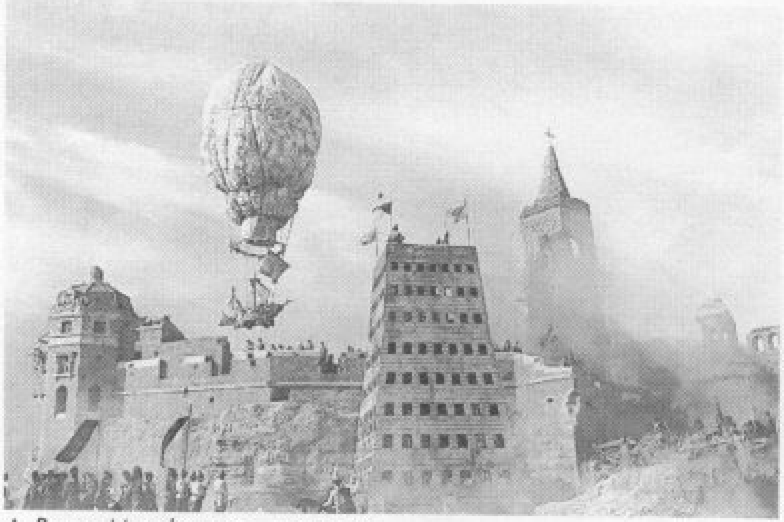
Nobody could accuse **The Adventures of Baron Munchausen** (PG) of being either neat or little. This vast and rambling tale cost tens of millions of dollars but unluckily there's little evidence that any of it was spent on the story.

Munchausen is a legendary German liar and Terry Gilliam, of Monty Python animation, Time Bandits and Brazil fame, is the director who dared bring

BIG Screen

these tall tales to the screen. In some ways he's the ideal person. Munchausen's mad adventures are always on the grandest scale, and Gilliams wild visual imagination is well suited to his surreal deeds. But despite the spectacle it doesn't hang together.

War is raging and the Baron insists it's because he and his servants relieved the sultan of all his gold. So he sets out to



▲ *Baron Munchausen — yawn city.*

find his odd friends and raise the siege, searching the moon and inside a whale before they're all re-united.

There's no end of talent in the film, from Eric Idle as Berthold, who runs so fast he has to wear iron balls round his ankles, to Robin Williams as the king of the moon, whose body and head just don't get on. See it if you like spectacle — but I'd be lying if I said you won't risk occasional boredom.

The secret of good movie making is not throwing money at the screen but telling an engrossing story with good actors. **Rainman** is just that. Two brothers, long separated, cross America together, and thanks to Dustin Hoffman and Tom Cruise it's a wonderful trip; often funny, sometimes sad but never boring.

Cruise is an ambitious young business man with big money worries while Hoffman is mentally disabled and unable to relate to the real world except through a series of closely regulated routines and rituals.

When Cruise learns of his brother on the death of their father, he realises that the only way he can get his hands on the old man's money is to take Hoffman from his mental hospital home and 'adopt' him. This cynical kidnapping eventually turns into understanding as the two travel across America.

Rainman is raised above



▲ *Hoffman and Cruise in Oscar hopeful — Rainman.*

the sentimental or bleakly depressing by the two superb performances; Cruise all cocky, hard hearted charm and Hoffman a shuffling, croaking innocent. Director Barry Levinson follows Good Morning Vietnam with a movie you shouldn't wait for a rainy day to see.

There's dirty doings in both **Scandal** and **Dangerous Liaisons,** so decide whether you prefer sexual indiscretions of the 18th century or 1960's. Either way it's pretty racy stuff.

Scandal tells the tale of the Profumo affair which, in 1963, led to one man's suicide, helped bring down the government, and made a young lady called Christine Keeler a household name.

Christine, a bright young thing from an ordinary background, was picked up by Stephen Ward, an osteopath. Ward invited her to live in his flat then introduced her to the rich and famous. What ensued is still fairly scandalous today — though we're more likely to be shocked at the way the establishment made Ward a scapegoat for the whole affair.

The film features superb acting by John Hurt as Ward, Ian McKellen as Profumo and



▲ *Roar — who switched off my computer?*

looking uncannily like the original, Joanne Whalley-Kimer as Christine. A powerful probe at British hypocrisy.

Of course the French have always done these things with far more style, even back before the revolution set heads rolling. Considering the Vicomte de Valmont's dangerous liaisons, maybe they should have chopped off something other than his head.

Based on the hit stage play, Les Liaisons Dangereuses, this is a superbly entertaining tale of bed-hopping by the sensualist Valmont, the picture of corruption as he tries to violate a virtuous young woman to win a bet with his former mistress. The cad!

John Malkovitch (Empire of the Sun) plays the count with an evil smile always on his lips, and Glenn Close gets involved in an even more deadly affair than Fatal Attraction. Even if you don't normally like costume dramas consider a dangerous liaison of your own.

This month's horror movies are a fairly shoddy bunch, of which **Fright Night — Part 2** (18) is probably the least worst. Poor young Charley Brewster is seeing vampires and werewolves again, despite psychiatric help. This says very little for American shrinks — they failed to help the young protagonist of Phantasm 2 either a couple of months back.

TV horror show host Roddy McDowall is back too, as Peter Vincent, the timidest hero ever to stake a vampire. There are some good effects but the whole is less than the parts.

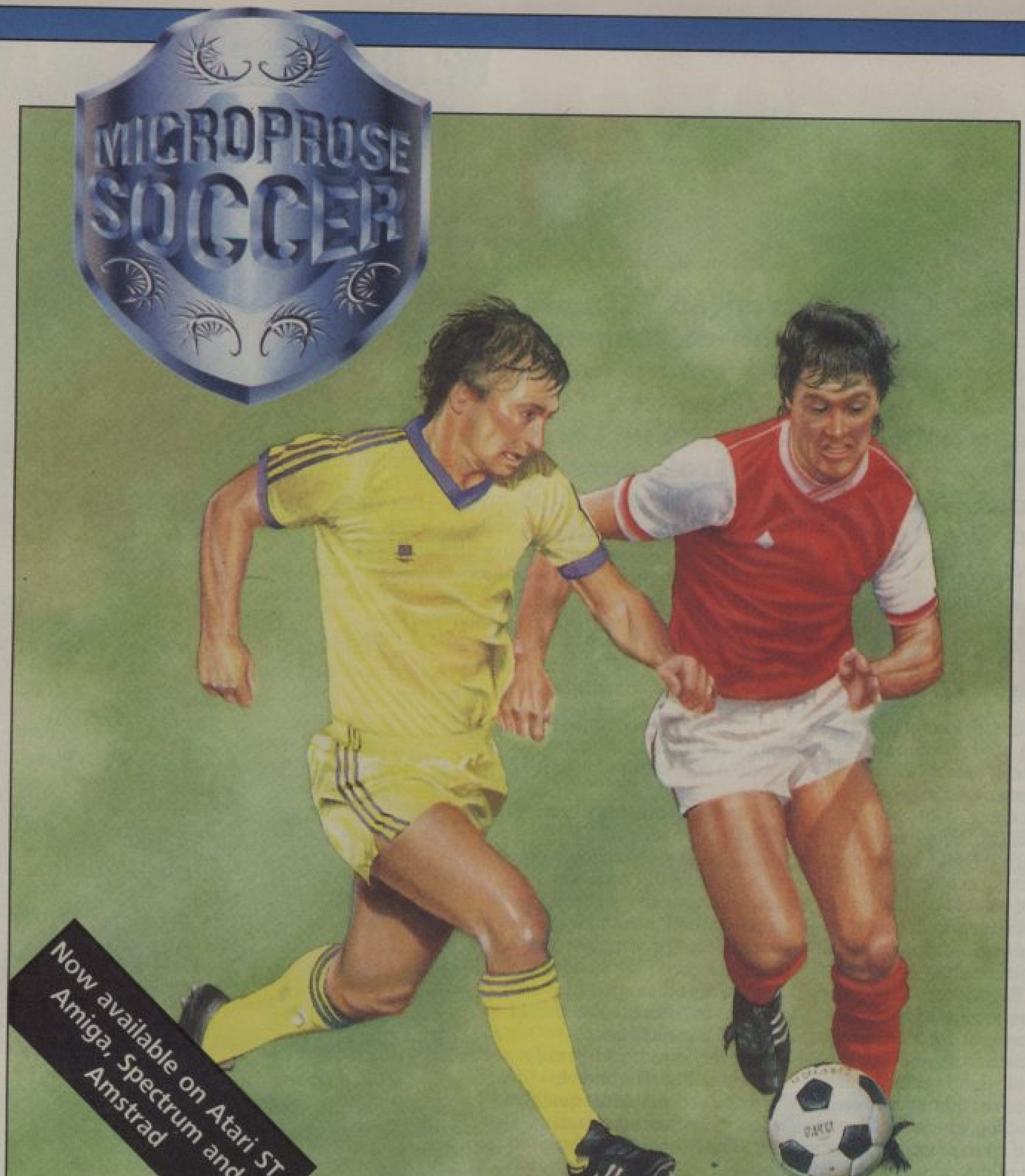
At least it's more coherent than **The Unholy** (18), a dreadful piece of pseudo religious rubbish in which young priest Ben Cross suffers at the hands of the devil's minions. These temptations of the Cross are supposed to be his secret desires, in which case he should never have become a priest in the first place.

The Moderns (15) is by far



▲ *Lashings of tomato sauce in The Unholy.*

the most interesting movie of the month, though this tale of arty goings on in the world of painters, poets and writers in the Paris of the 1920's, won't be for everyone. Its evocation of that crazy decade and the eccentrics who made it so important is peppered with brilliant performances. A truly magical movie from Alan Rudolph (Trouble in Mind).



WHAT'S THE SCORE?

It's fun, fast, exciting and addictive. MicroProse Soccer keeps you on your toes, however often you play.

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An overhead perspective of the pitch makes it easy to play good graphics and sound effects make every match seem real.

Fully animated players can perform a whole variety of movements, including overhead and banana kicks. There are 29 different teams and a unique action-replay facility.

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GAME OF THE MONTH — C&VG

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AGM

This month Advanced Games Master has a wealth of computer role playing and adventure news. Keith Campbell discovers the risque delights of Leisure Suit Larry II, Wayne finds a good role playing book in Slaughter Mountain Run and we bring you all the latest news.

Robo-Combat

Battletech manufacturers — **FASA** have released two new products, namely **Renegade Legion** and **Renegade Interceptor.** Although not **Battletech Supplements,** these two new releases cover the same hi-tech form of gaming that fans of robotic combat will appreciate.

The games take place in a futuristic setting, which has early Roman overtones. There are two groups of opposing forces — the Imperial Empire and the Renegade Legion — both of whom vie for galactic freedom or domination — depending which side you are on. Of course combat is the name of the game and this is carried out either in the airless void of space by squadrons of advanced space fighters or on the dust ridden wastelands of various planets by the ultra modern equivalent of massive tanks.

The two games have been created to be used in conjunction with each other, so you can get a full scale war going on your living room table! Although both games are straighforward, totally inexperienced players should not attempt them, because the amount of rules involved could prove difficult to master. However, if you have already conquered the **Battletech** system, you should be qualified enough to give these games a try. They don't come cheap though, selling for a princely £19.95 EACH!

▼ *Battletech Sequel — Renegade Legion ripe for computerisation.*



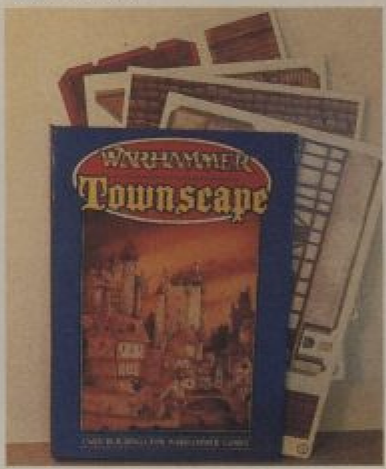
Warhammer Doubtful

Warhammer the computer game is unlikely to see the light of day in 1989.

The hit fantasy role playing board game from Games Work Shop was supposed to be converted by Activision — but no work has been carried out on the game and it looks like the Reading based company may have lost the licence.

Games Work Shop spokesperson Andy Jones told C+VG "The Activision chapter is now more or less closed" and said that GW were in discussion with a number of other software houses about Warhammer and their other popular games — Bloodbowl and Dark Future.

▼ *Warhammer — computers still waiting.*



AD & D

The hottest news in fantasy role playing at the moment is the imminent release of the revised **Advanced Dungeons and Dragons** manuals.

The first release will be the new **Players Manual,** which is expected in the shops in March. This volume will be approximately 256 pages long and contain all the rule changes and improvements that have been engineered over the last ten years. It will also take into account the wishes and requests of several thousand players who replied to a special TSR survey. The revised material will be presented in a clear, concise format, with a complete index. The price is expected to be around the £11.95 mark.

May will see the release of the new **Dungeon Master's** guide. For around £10.95 players can expect to receive a 192 page book, which — it is claimed — will be written with easy reference in mind. It is hoped that by releasing this definitive guide, it will clear up all the inconsistencies, and awkward mechanics that were captured in the original, while at the same time adding a whole new realm of fresh and exciting information.

While the aforementioned books are officially "Enhancements" to the AD+D system the **Monstrous**



▲ne
AD n

Battle Titans

Games Workshop have been very busy lately with no less than six new releases.

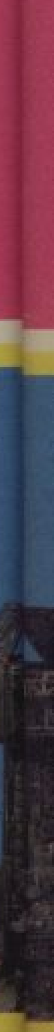
The most important release will be **Battle Titans.** This is a box set of six plastic warlord battle class Titans, solely for use with their **Adeptus Titanicus** game — which is reviewed in this very issue of C+VG. This will enable players to recreate the epic battles that took place in the Horus Heresy and generally cause mass metal mayhem. Each box sells for £9.99.

Imperial Guard contains a set of 36 plastic guardsmen, each of who come with separate arms and weapons to help you vary your game. Again this sells for £9.99 and is intended for use with Titans.

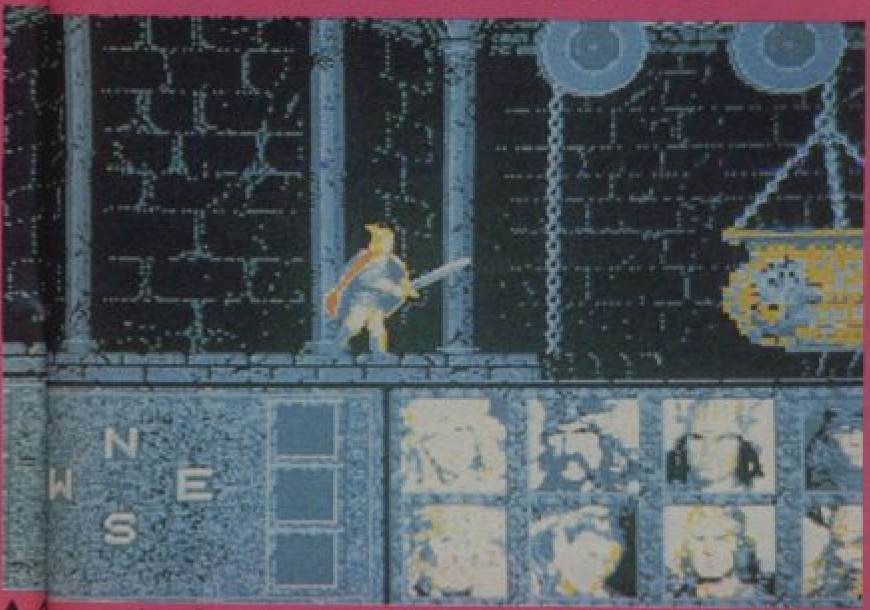
White Line Fever us an advanced rules supplement for GW's Dark Future, which was reviewed in the January edition of C+VG. Fever allows for more complex motoring manoeuvres, new weaponand combat rules as well as a complete vehicle design system. **Fever** will cost you a reasonable £7.99.

Bloodblowl fans will be pleased to note that a new supplement for the game will be released soon. **Star Players** is a booklet that gives you all the information you will need for using super stars in your Bloodbowl teams. This includes full details of special skills available to players, new rules for creating your own heroes, 36 star player cards, career stats of all the top players currently available, rules for any extra large players you may wish to use and the current line up of eight of the greatest teams ever.

The two final releases are **Slaves To Darkness** and



D-New Manuals



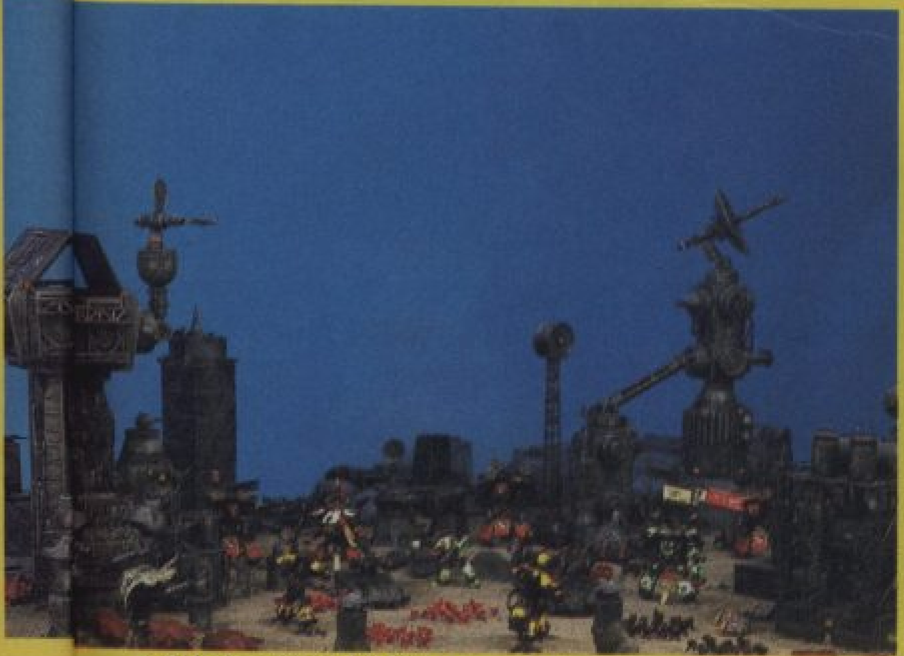
▲ A new versions for computer trickle through T.S.R. announce new AD&D manuals — the biggest news in role playing for years.

Compendium is an official replacement to the old Monster manuals.

All the monster information sheets will be punched to fit the binder, enabling the player to file the monsters in any order they desire. Volume two of the **Monstrous Compendium** — available in August — will contain a further 144 pages that will fit neatly into the original binder, while volume three — availble in November — will be dedicated exclusively to the weird beasts of the **Forgotten Realms.** The prices are £10.95, £9.99 and £5.95 respectively.

Finally, ardent AD+D players will be pleased to note that **TSR**are not chaning the old AD+D game. The booklets you have will still enable you to play **AD+D,** but the new releases will contain all the official rule changes and older, less well explained game mechanics.

Meanwhile Pools of Radiance the RPG based on AD&D has so far only been launched on the C64 and PC. ST, Amiga and Spectrum versions are not expected for another month at least. Heroes of the Lance — the arcade adventure based on AD&D is now out on all formats apart from the C64.



▲ Rebel and loyalist titans square up.

Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay; Soft Cover edition. Slaves is the second and final release in the Realm Of Chaos series and explores the Warhammer mythos in depth to cover such topics as the chaos bestiary, various army lists and terrain generation. Not bad for £14.99.

Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay — Soft Cover edition is a compplete gaming system for the Warhammer FRP system. This enables a group of players to create individual characters and run a campaign around a whole sword and sorcery world. this is not at all bad value for £9.99.

Origin Tell Tangled Tales

The excellent Origin series of role playing games are about to be launched on a variety of new formats.

Times of Lore received a C+VG hit when it was reviewed last year on the C64 and ST. From March Spectrum, CPC and Amiga owners will be able to attempt to restore peace to the troubled Kingdom of Alboreth. The 12,000 location epic that is Times of Lore is regarded as one of Origin's best games yet — even out performing the classic Ultima series in terms of interaction and graphics.

Talking of the Ultima series — No's I, II and III are being bundled in America for the price of one. Origin spokesperson Martin Moth said "the games will be available in the UK between March and April at £19.95 on C64 and £24.95 for 16 bit.



▲ *Ultima — three for one deal.*

Also new from Origin is a brand new game called Tangled Tales. Origin describe Tangled Tales as a departure from the traditional 'dark and heavy' themes of role playing games. It tells of a wizard's apprentice (the game player) caught up in an outlandish world that includes haunted houses and medieval fortresses.

Head to Head Dungeons

Image Works are about to launch the first head to head role playing game in the shape of Crystal Maze.

Set in a huge castle with the now ubiquitous grey stone walls marking its labyrinthine passages and corridors. The quest is to find four crystals which will enable you to cast two spells. One to banish evil and the other to maintain peace.

The game features a horizontally split screen which enables each player to explore different parts of the castle at the same time. As they explore they will meet and can interact with several strange characters.

Crystal Maze will be launched in April for the Amiga, ST, C64 and PC. No Speccy version alas.

▼ *Crystal maze — two player role playing.*



AGM

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Atari ST screens shown

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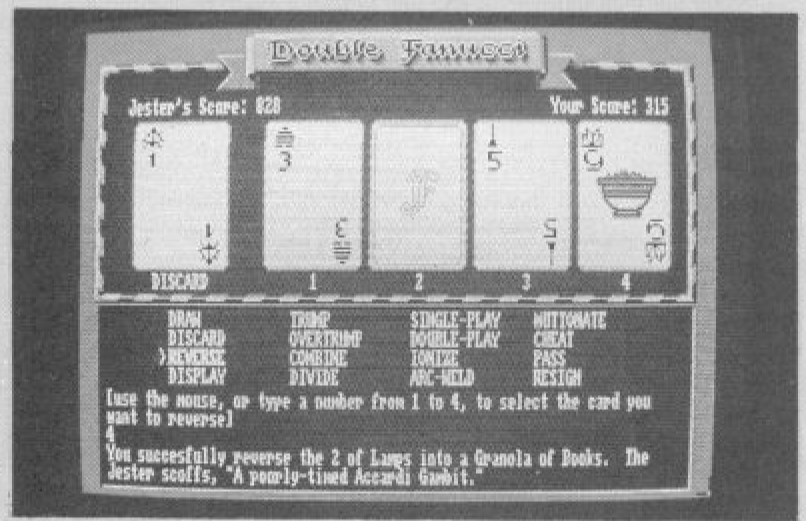


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News

Zork is Back



▲ *Zork Zero — Keith Campbell is wetting himself over his.*

The first versions of Zork Zero, prequel to Infocom's Classic Zorks I, II, and III, are beginning to appear in the USA. First off the production line was the Macintosh version, to be followed by Apple, IBM, and Amiga. Bad news for Atari ST owners is that there are no plans for an ST version, and indeed, it would appear that the ST has been dropped as a target machine for all future Infocom titles.

An early glimpse reveals ZZ has an extremely clever mapping system, displayed on a separate page with the command MAP. All locations in a 'group' (and I haven't quite worked out what constitutes a group yet) are displayed, with the current one highlighted with a flashing border. Tails leading nowhere indicate exits not yet used, giving an immediate picture of the 'holes' in the player's exploration. Most useful of all, the map is mouse sensitive. That means you can move about by clicking on it — and can even click on an empty space near an exit tail, to enter a new location. At this point, the main screen returns automatically, with the new location description displayed. The player starts off as a lowly servant waiting at table for a banquet hosted by the Great Lord Dimwit Flathead. In sweeps the wizard Megaboz, and the end of the Great Underground Empire is at hand.

Millenium – Sex Shocker

Is it a strategy game, an adventure, or an arcade game? This is the question tormenting Activision who cannot slot their forthcoming monster epic, Millenium 2.2, into a convenient classification.

The earth has become uninhabitable following collision with an asteroid. Foreseeing this event, man established a base on the moon, and now the race is on for the last representatives of the human race, to exploit the resources of the solar system to return earth to a state capable of supporting life once more.

Building spacecrafts, mining planets and their moons, and conducting the necessary research to do this from are the basic mechanics of the game, but it has far more to offer than a mere prospecting game.

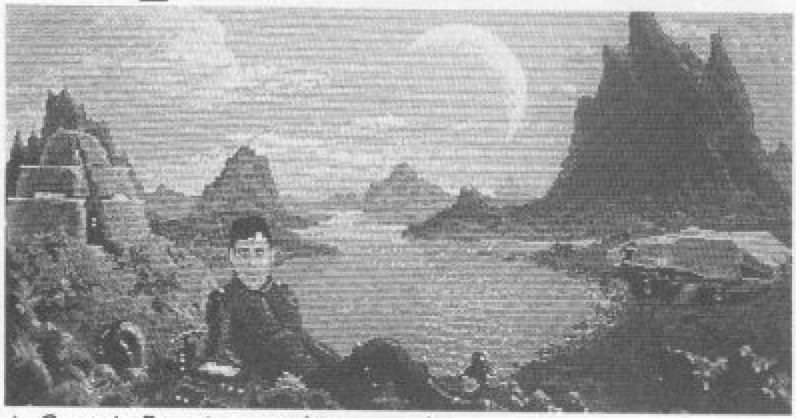
Played in real time, all sorts of unsuspected things happen during play, providing real problems which require typical adventurer style brain-bashing to solve.

Millenium will be available for ST, PC, and Amiga, around the end of March. And the sex? There isn't any.

▼ *Millenium 2.2's author — Jai Reidemann.*



Captain Frontier



▲ *Captain Frontier rests his weary bones.*

Meet Captain Frontier, retired secret service officer and citizen of the planet Assyndra who is brought back into service to rescue kidnapped scientist Dr Slimms.

Set in a world enclosed in a big glass bottle — a Terrarium — which is also the title of the game.

Frontier's enemy have infiltrated the Assyndrian top secret laboratory by miniaturising a secret army of warriors and hiding them in the terrarium. They overpower her, miniaturise her, and incarcerater her in a tower. But where? That's for you to fathom in this adventure come arcade game for Amiga, ST and PC. Courtesy of Image Works.

It's a Mythtery

Well, everyone gets it wrong occasionally! Our February issue feature on Myth, the Magnetic Scrolls mini-adventure going free to members of Official Secrets, contained a couple of inaccuracies.

Contrary to what we stated, Myth will NOT be available (at any price) to the general public, nor even to members of Special Reserve, the discount mail-order software club associated with Official Secrets. To get a copy of myth, you will have to be an Official Secrets member, or become one, before the end of July.

We also stated that graphics will only be provided on 16-bit versions of Myth. In fact, Secrets have since decided that some 8-bit versions will also have graphics. Here is a complete breakdown of availability:

Myth WITH graphics: Amiga; ST; Macintosh; IBM PC with EGA (5.25 & 3.5 disk); C-64 disk; Amstrad PCW.

Myth TEXT ONLY: IBM PC without EGA; Spectrum +3; Spectrum 128 tape.

SLAUGHTER MOUNTAIN RUN

► **GAME: "SLAUGHTER MOUNTAIN"**
► **CREATED BY: JOE DEVER**
► **PRODUCED BY: BEAVER BOOKS**
► **PRICE: £2.50**

Joe Dever is a name well known to C+VG readers. Over the years Joe has won many prestigious awards, the most famous of which was presented to him for his "Lone Wolf" adventures. In this twelve book series you played the part of Wolf, the last Kai master, who aimed to re-establish the honour of the Kai people using swordplay and magic.

About a year ago Joe chose to depart from his usual sword and sorcery style and created a new series of books called Freeway Warrior which were set on Earth in a post-nuclear war society.

In Slaughter Mountain Run you play Cal Phoenix, a young man who has spent eight years living in an underground mining complex with his aunt and uncle. The reason for this is that HAVOC — The Hijack, Assassination and Violent Opposition Consortium — an organisation consisting of political terrorists who are funded by organised crime, have managed to cause total nuclear devastation.

Whilst living underground, you manage to learn a great deal from your relations. Your uncle teaches you how to refine gasoline and maintain generators, whilst your aunt teaches you first aid, how to keep fit and generally assists in your education.

In the year 2020AD, you leave your underground existence to discover the nightmare that the bombs left behind. Hardly any structures stand, once fertile plains are now barren wastelands and the weather changes continually.

In the first book in the series — which was called Highway Holocaust — you have to lead your people across a hostile wildland, in search of food, water and a safer place to live. However, during your adventure your girl friend, Kate Norton, gets kidnapped by a leader of a huge gang of bikers called Mad Dog Mitchigan, and try as you may, you just can't rescue her.

Slaughter Mountain Run — the second book in the series — sees you try and settle that score by trying to rescue your kidnapped girlfriend. It would appear that Mad Dog has taken the bulk of his bikers to a place called San Angelo for peace talks with Mekong Mike, who is also a leader of another large marauding pack of bikers.

During the obvious confusion and chaos caused by the talks, it would be possible for one person to sneak in, find out where Kate is being held, rescue her and then sneak out before anyone was any the wiser.

Of course this task is a lot harder than it sounds and if you are to complete it without getting killed you will have to overcome all kinds of problems. Apart from the 100's of Bikers, Punks, Greasers and Hells Angels knocking about, there are many other dangers including poisonous spiders, Coyotes, freak weather conditions, and cannibals to name but a few.

In fact, I found this book a lot harder to play than it's predecessor and you are really going to have to think hard and fast if you are going to survive.

It doesn't matter if you haven't played the Freeway Warrior as each book can be played individually. However, you can also combine the books to create an epic Solo Role Playing game.



Mad Mitch — packed with illustrations.

Another advantage of being a regular player is that you can move your character — Cal — from book to book — if he survives that is! You are allowed to take all the equipment they may have obtained on a previous adventure with you as well as any Skill bonus points you may have obtained. Of course this gives him a better chance of surviving in the long run. It's not that much of an advantage, but in a Role Playing book as tough as this one, you'll need all the help you can get.

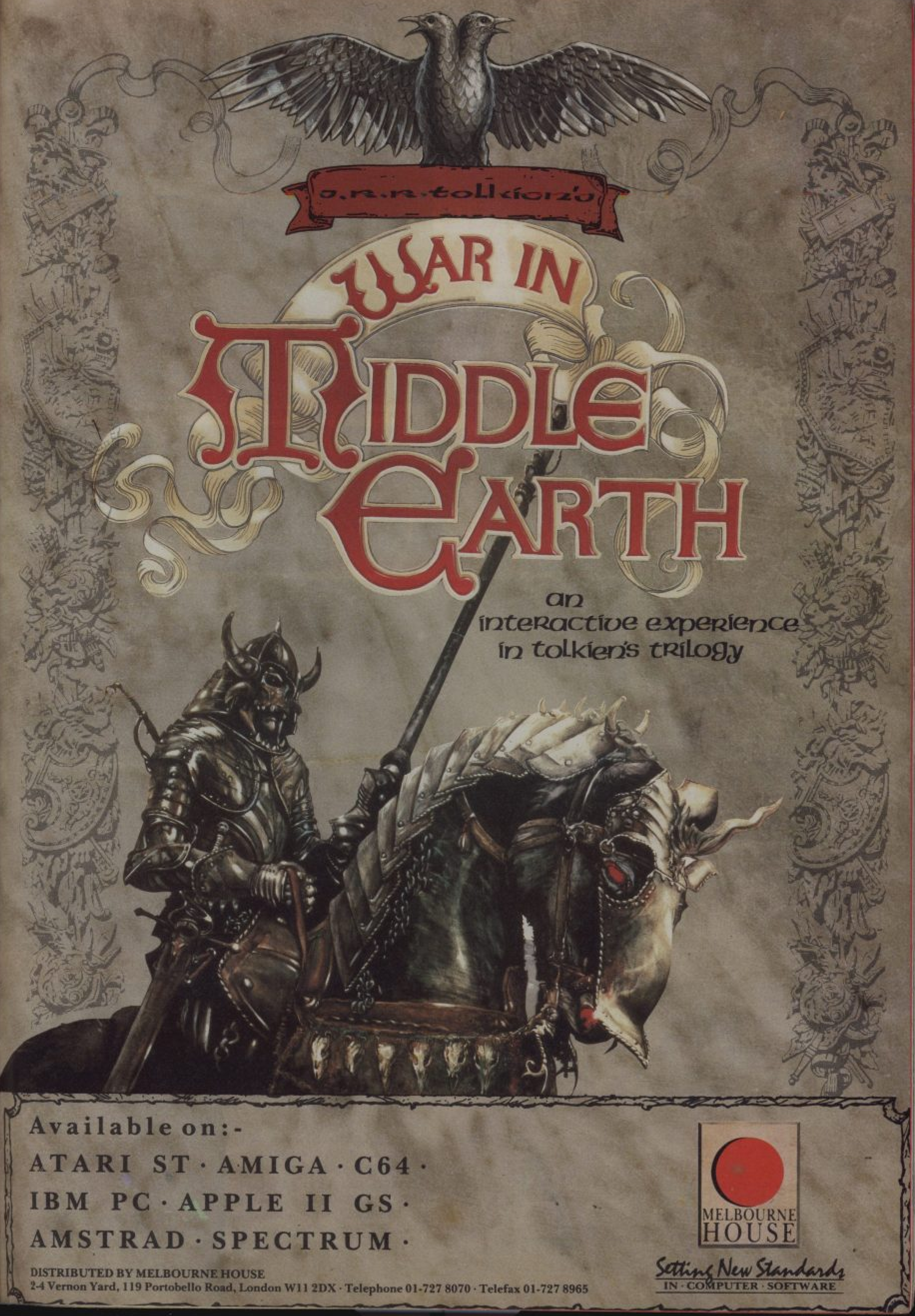
Slaughter is probably Joe's best work to date. He writes in an economic, yet descriptive style that is full of short sharp punches, which never let you settle for a moment. My only criticism is that he has stereotyped most of the characters. All the baddies are the social outcasts of today (bikers, punks, skinheads and even American Indians!), whilst all the goodies are clean cut, white American males. About as original as mom's apple pie. What I would have given to see a baddie in a three piece suit.

All in all Slaughter Mountain Run will keep you occupied for hours. This book is well over 300 pages long and contains 350 large gaming sections, a whole combat system, all the charts and tables you need, a well illustrated colour map and an introductory story.

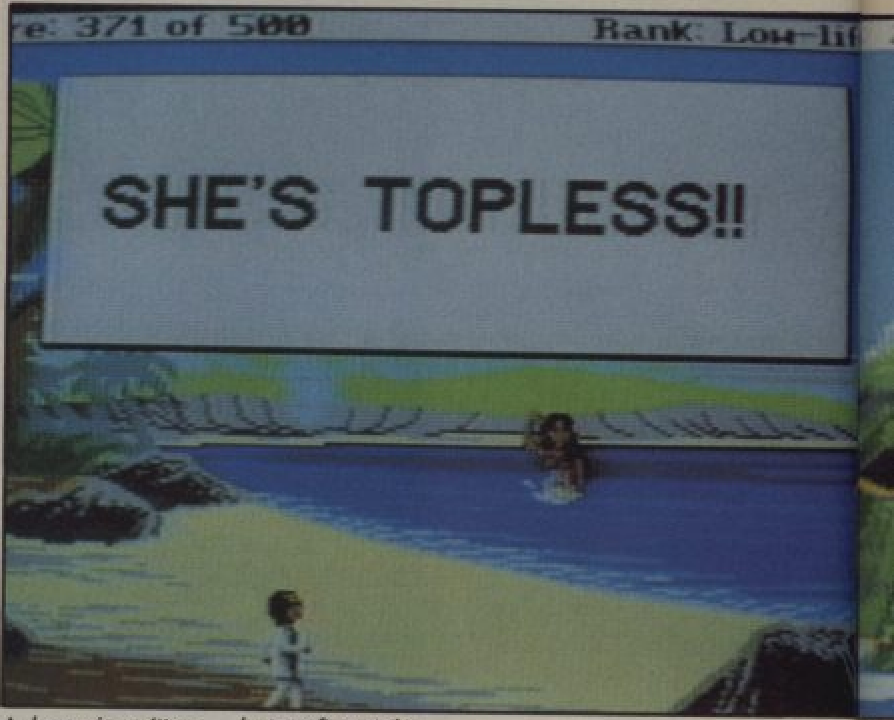
You get all this for just £2.50 and I consider this tremendous value for money. Recommended!

WAYNE

► PLAYABILITY 89%
► COMPLEXITY 41%
► DESIGN 91%
► VALUE 90%
► **OVERALL 91%**


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▲ Larry is smitten... lust at first sight.

LEISURE SU

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Welcome back, Larry! But it's not like you to be mowing somebody else's lawn! Oh I get it — payment in kind, I suppose!

That lovable, loathable, randy little schmuck, would you believe, has shacked up with Eve, a girl from his Lounge Lizard days. Only trouble is, Eve knows nothing about it yet, so when he arrives home to find Larry installed, and calmly cutting her gras she goes wild and Larry is sent packing, with nothing in his pockets save a dollar, scavenged from a pair of Eve's old panties.

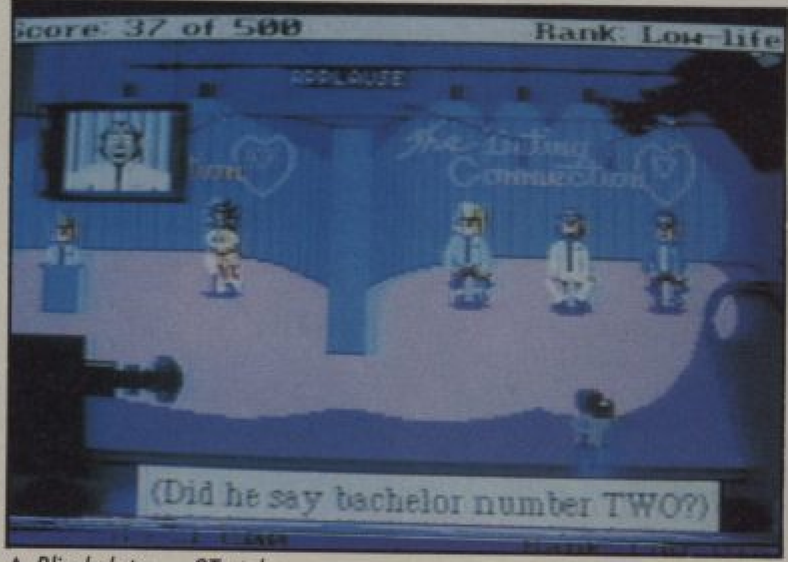
However, fortune is about to smile on Larry, in the shape of a short-sighted receptionist at the TV studios. Cheat that he is, Larry manages to become a candidate for a Blind Date with Barbara Bimbo, a 'batchelorette' from Airhead, California (hobbies include tantalising elderly men; turn-offs include the aroma of resin core solder.) In a hilarious take off of the famous TV game, Larry wins a month's cruise in the company of this moronic female, and a million dollars a year for life. So off he goes to do some last minute shopping.

But Larry II isn't all fun and games. Larry is about to get involved in the evil machinations of arch-villain Dr Nonookie, whose secret base is the interior of an extinct volcano on a remote island. No prizes for guessing that the underlying theme is a spoof of Ian Fleming's Dr. No.

Now it so happens,that by the time Larry joins the cruise, unbeknown to him, he is carrying some top secret microfiche film hidden an antique Peruvian Onklunk. He'd been showing off again — this time by chatting up a Spanish girl in a music shop. His Spanish was so poor that the sentences he uttered, by sheer coincidence, were pre-arranged recognition code phrases. And by even greater coincidence, the real spy is Larry's double.

The trouble with Larry is, he tends to chase after anything in a skirt, and many a wink and a wiggle leads Larry to his doom under a travelling laser beam, at the hands of a whole series of Dr. Nonookie's lovely henchettes.

Leave them alone, Larry, you know it makes sense! Thought you'd caught a live one by the pool, didn't you, and where did that lead? Yeah, the cold dip! And Larry, what are you doing with that bikini top stuffed in your pocket?



▲ Blind date — ST style.

Larry soon has to make a hurried departure from the cruise, and after 10 gruelling days drifting at sea, finds himself washed up on the sandy beach of a holiday isle. Good restaurants, smart hotel rooms, a nude beach, and a barbershop that does a special line in wax treatment, are all within easy walking distance. But so are the KGB, and it takes all Larry's cunning to avoid recognition, and to escape to the airport.

Ever stood in a queue at a Post Office? You're always waiting at the wrong counter, right? Well, it's like that for Larry at the airport check-in desk, and nothing short of a bomb will shift the queue that Larry decides to join! After a perilous flight, Larry finds himself in a jungle on Nonookie's island. Killer bees, an anaconda, deadly quicksands, and pirhanas are hazards now facing Larry before he meets his true love, daughter of the local chief! There follows a love scene that is enough to bring tears to your eyes — tears of mirth!

Trouble is, before he will sanction a marriage, chiefy wants Larry to prove himself, first by writing a program in



▲ Our hero on the prowl.

▼ Asse ler







▲ So besotted — he dresses up in drag to impress her.

IT LARRY II



▼ Assembler code is route to a fair maiden's heart.





▲ Superb graphics in Larry II.

assembler, and then by defeating Nonookie, which he does in a studpendous finale that plays itself like a film.

Sierra On-line have substantially upgraded their system since Larry's earlier appearance. Text windows not only contain far more, they look a whole lot smarter. Input text goes into a window that pops on to the screen as soon as any character key is pressed. The SAVE/ RESTORE options are far more user friendly than the somewhat confusing ones of old.

But by far the biggest improvement comes in the graphics, which are more detailed, with extensive animation, often even with incidental background animation, like a train running along a track in the distance, or a plane coming in to land, seen through an airport window. All this takes up storage space — the ST version comes on three disks, and they are double sided. The pictures do take a while to load, but this is alleviated by some clever picture catching in memory, eliminating disk loads when moving to locations recently visited.

The story itself, however, is less spicy than its predecessor. Larry does score once or twice (try it with the hotel maid!) but invariably it leads to his demise. A nice touch is a filth Level control, infinitely variable between Clean and Dirty, but even with this set to maximum dirty, the game barely achieves a Leather Goddesses 'tame'.

The puzzles are mostly of the type where you have to get it wrong first, and then go back (often quite a long way) to get it right in hindsight. This means you MUST save regularly, and I would recommend pre-formatting at least a couple of disks, to save all the positions you are likely to need. Some of the puzzles are extremely obscure, although none are very complex. Whereas in, say, an Infocom adventure, the player would have to figure out the detailed steps to get through the mechanism of a puzzle, here it is often a matter of talking (in general) to the right person, at which point the computer takes over by assuming, correctly, exactly what Larry wants to say.

The old theme tune is back (I like it so much I always let it play itself out) and there's a very haunting melody to accompany a couple of romantic interludes. Here, as in a few other parts of the game, fairly lengthy animated sequences are played out, during which the player simply sits back, watches, and reads the accompanying text. And a word of warning the first time you play, make sure you don't hit a key whilst the titles are displaying, or you will miss the lengthy animated introduction to the story — the title by-pass takes you straight into the story cold.

The animation is superb, and includes some hilarious sequences in which Larry, dressed in drag, unbelievably regains his balance when teetering on the edge of a cliffside path. And during the game, Larry himself can and will swim, dive, and crawl, at times, as well as having great fun under the bedclothes!

Larry II is a light hearted romp of an adventure, that tells a humorous story in a linear way. You get it right or you get it wrong, in a predetermined sequence. But more importantly, it is a superb piece of all-round entertainment, particularly, but not exclusively, suited to adventure players.

Keith Campbell

ST

▶ VOCABULARY	75%
▶ GRAPHICS	91%
▶ PLAYABILITY	76%
▶ VALUE	88%
▶ **OVERALL**	**90%**

AGM

AGM

The PBM scene has been expanding at a rapid rate recently and this can be confirmed by the amount of the new PBM games and companies that have arrived on the market. Always first with the news, Wayne brings you the hottest PBM gossip around and this month he sorts the good from the bad.

Quest is a new semi professional PBM run by Michael Ward and his four associates. *Quest* is your typical hand moderated sword and sorcery PBM, allowing you to play a single human character who's aim is to travel the world and explore its surroundings. Your character can be one of either four character classes — Warrior, Wizard, Thief or Priest — each of which has its own special skills.

You have 40 points to allocate these skills which range from stealth to science. Once this is done you may choose one of the eight gods to worship or decide to become an atheist. Finally you can choose a mutation for your character if you wish. This is left totally up to you and no hints are given to help you make up your mind.

The game is based on the land of Questron — a name obviously nicked from the awful computer game of the same name — where a constant war beweeen the forces of good and chaos is being fought. You have to boldly explore the hostile regions, gaining experience points as you go, which help your improve abilities.

The rule book is a very small, cheap and nasty photocopied affair, which is littered with spelling mistakes and bad grammar. It is also totally unhelpful and gives you no idea what the game is supposed to be about.

For me the saving grace of the whole affair was the price. A Start Up costs only £1.50 and further turns are a reasonable 75p, so if you are looking for a cut price sword and sorcery game this could be for you, if you are prepared to put up with the tatty set up material.

Quest is run by Michael Ward, 3 Queen Elenors Drive, Knowle, Solihull, Birmingham.

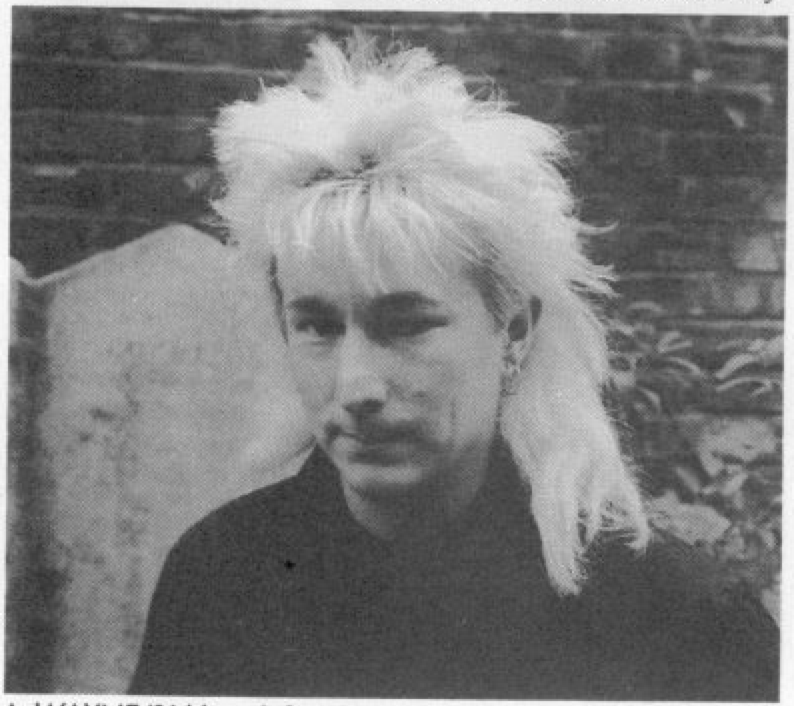
Now one game that really is worth playing is *Yshkar.* This hand moderated game has received high critical acclaim on the PBM grapevine and I have met and spoke to head honcho and full time GM — Mike Richards — many times.

He has created his world on a massive series of continents, which are set on a totally flat world called *Gwaras.* The original continent of Gwaras is in fact over subscribed by potential players at the moment, but Mike had anticipated this possiblity a long time ago, so in his spare time he created another area called Yshkar and spent over a year training up a new GM to deal with it.

The new area is now ready to receive, so he has released a new revised rule book to deal with it. This large A4 photocopied booklet is a daunting read, but is very much worth the effort. It is well put together, consisting of player-friendly text and great artwork. Upon reading it you cannot fail to be slowly but surely drawn into the game.

Once again it is a single character sword and scorcery affair, but not at all like many other of the hack and slay PBM's you will find on the market today. Magic in Mike's world is a very rare and feared phenomenon. Magic Users are more likely to be hated, not respected.

Sword fighting and any other form of armed combat is a very realistic, not to say deadly, option, and players who continually use violence to obtain what they desire will soon end up with one dead character.



▲ *WAYNE "Yshkar-definitely worth playing".*

The whole *Gwaras* game originally grew from an AD +D campaign which, due to many reaons, was modified,changed and turned into a postal game. I know that Mike tries his hardest not to interfere with what a character is trying to achieve, instead he leaves this to the other players and certain NPC's who are pitted against both your aims and objectives.

The emphasis in *Yshkar* is on pure role playing and the idea is to portray your character in the manner that you have created it. There are no set aims in the game, and this is explained many times throughout the rule book. It is up to you to guide your character and get it to attempt ideas and goals that YOU create.

The start up in *Yshkar* is £3.50 and for this you receive the rule book, an A3 map and one free turn. Further turn fees are a very reasonable £1.25 and run to a minimum of 1000 words. However, Mike claims that they can sometimes be more than twice that length.

Interested players should contact Mike at: MJR Games, Flat 3, 19 Palace Rd, East Molesey, Hampton Court, Surrey, KT 8 9DL.

Another new game with a growing reputation is *Slaves and Slavers* which is run by Harry's Games. Each player controls ten characters with as many special skills as they wish to allocate!!

The game has a definite objective, which is to kill the evil overlord. This nasty piece of work unleashed a mass of death and destruction on both the slaves and slavers, leaving them thirsting for revenge, albit for different reasons.

The slaves wish to kill the overload for nothing more than vegeance, while the slavers want to kill hm so they can take his place. On the way to sort out the 'orrible Overlord, your boat is suddenly wrecked on a strange coast far from home. Your characters are washed ashore unarmed — and in the case of slaves — naked!!

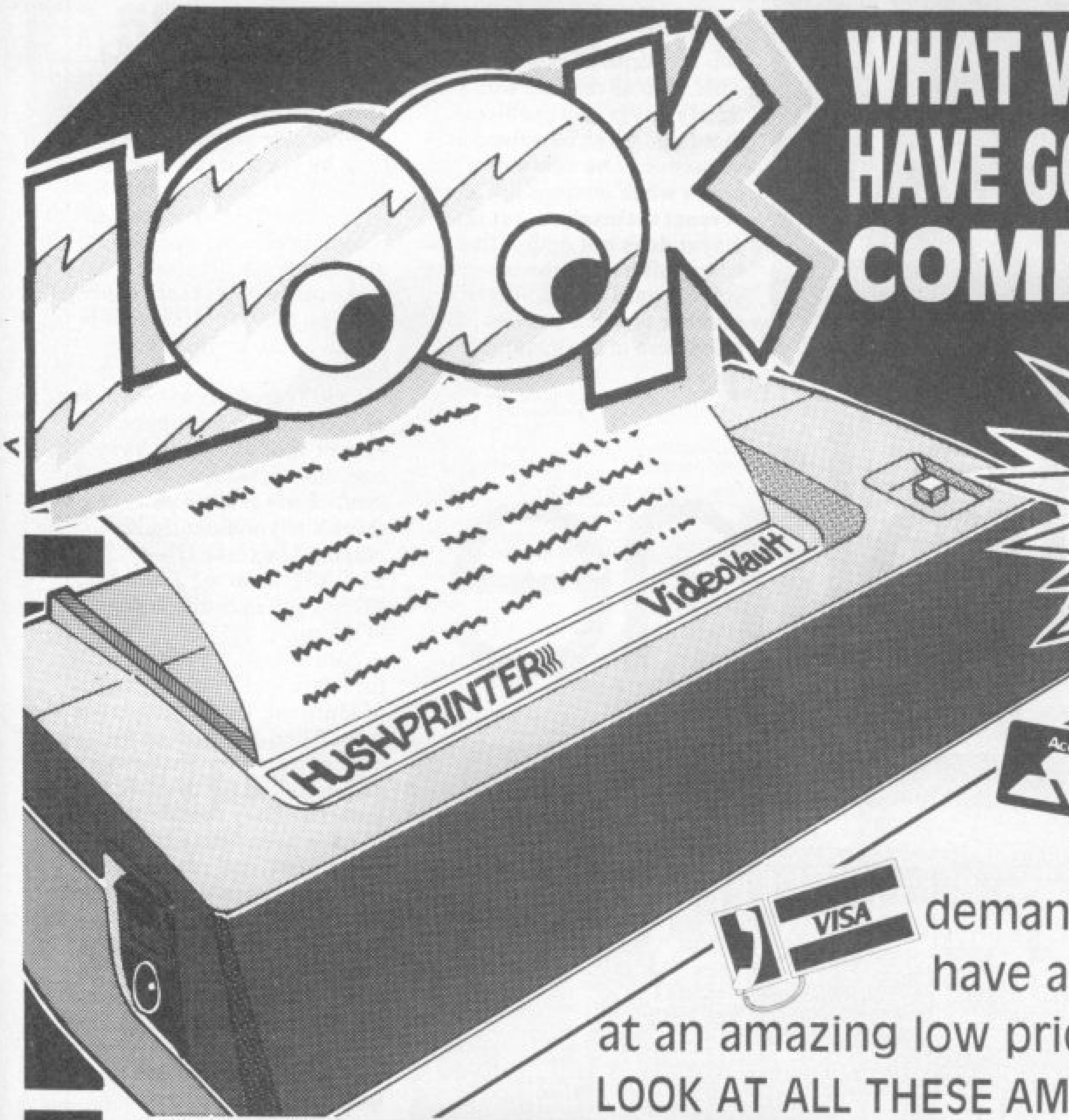
You will soon find that the world your characters inhabit is full of flesh eating monsters and evil creatures, so arming and protecting yourself is your main objective.

Each turn is the equivalent of one day and you may move four hexes on your map each turn. However, all this changes if you obtain either horses or boats, as they increase your movement dramatically. You are allowed as many actions as you wish, except when large battles are in progress, when you may wish to reconsider your position. Combat is described in the most basic terms possible to enhance the game speed so people looking for graphic gore may well wish to look elsewhere.

Start up in the game costs £5.00, and for this you get a rule book and three free turns. Future turns cost £1.50 each or £1.00 if you do nothing more than move. Potential players should contact: H Garvin c/o Harry's Games, 26 Newmarket St, Soleraine, Co Londonderry BT52, 1EH.

That's all for this month.

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KEITH CAMPBELL'S WRITE-IN

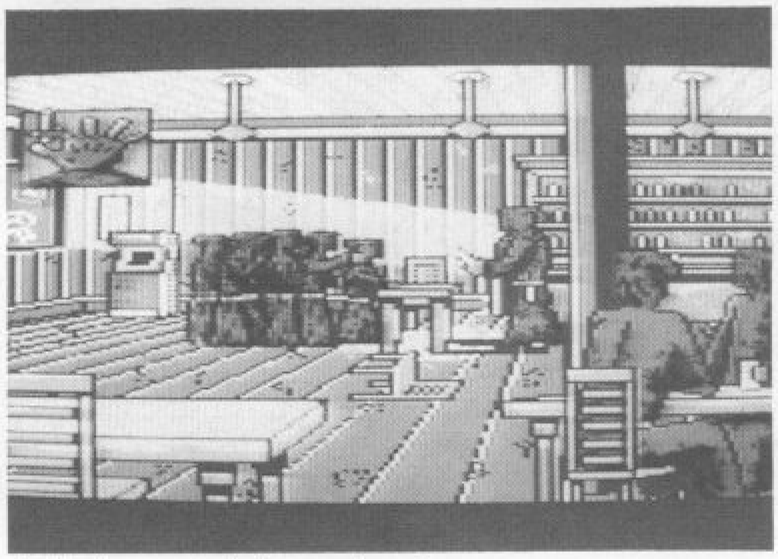
Helpline

The hunters of Wolfman are after Svetomir Petrovic of Belgrade! As soon as he drops off to sleep, a compulsion with him whenever he inserts a crystal into a recess in the altar, they kill him! When Svetomir isn't playing Wolfman, he's likely to be found battling his way through Frankenstein — where he also meets an untimely end. This time the killer is a man standing on a street corner in a pool of light, in the company of a woman. Who can help our Yugoslavian friend to avoid death — twice?

Jason Golterman writes from Cairo, with problems in King's Quest 3. He is having great difficulty trying to find the magic wand and the map. He thinks they are locked in Manannan's study, but he can't find the key. Are they — or is he simply wasting his time looking for it? His final plea concerns the desert, "Is there anything of importance there?" he asks.

Three wise words are sought after by David Boxall of Epsom. They are urgently needed for use in Dargoth's Tower, on level three of Bard's Tale II.

Stephan Englhart of Ingolstadt, is not happy with Fish! Stephan reviews adventures for a number of German computer magazines, and suggests that the difference between Magnetic Scrolls and Infocom, is that Infocom produces a good entertaining story, to which the puzzles are only secondary, whilst Scrolls just try to hang a series of puzzles together. And he cites a



▲ *Manhunter — help is at hand.*

number of logical bugs in Fish, Scrolls latest. For example, if you hold the crucible ON the fire, it is too hot for you to hold, whereas if you hold it IN the fire, the gold melts. And hitting the mould with the hammer only works if you are holding the mould, "which," comments Stephan, "would surely be a bit painful?"

No doubt Ms Sinclair of Mag Scrolls will have some observations on the points you make, Stephan, but meanwhile, who can say Infocom produces stories at all? At the time of writing they haven't produced even a bugged adventure in the last 12 months!

Perhaps Infocom are basking in their past glory, for there is no doubt that their older adventures, which seem hardly to age at all, are still being played avidly. Lurking Horror is currently making a Helpline comeback with Amiga owners, and there are two favourite sticking points. This is an adventure with very tightly integrated problems, that must often be solved in sequence. The confusion arises when obvious problems present themselves, yet the player does not realise that he is way off having the means to solve it until he has solved a number of other puzzles elsewhere in the game.

To illustrate the point, a constant niggle is: "What should I be doing about the urchin — he's obviously there for a purpose?" and this is often coupled with the question: "How do you get through the arch in the alchemy lab?" You see, the player has no way of knowing that the urchin is unable to fulfil his task in the game, until certain things have been done beyond the alchemy arch! So look in the clues section for some guidance . . .

And even further back in the annals of Infocom, Zork 3 is puzzling William Hern of Aberdeen, a seasoned adventurer if ever there was one. William is trying to open the chest he found at the bottom of a cliff. He can tie it to a rope and pass it to the man at the top, but the trouble is, this fellow simply steals the contents.

William has another request to make. He has been playing a vast game called Universe II for some months now, and marvels at its depth. However, he has yet to hear of anyone else playing it, and feels he is missing out on part of the fun of adventuring, which is to be able to turn to someone else for assistance, or to get fresh determination make more progress! "I surely can't be the only Universe II player in the world!" he exclaims.

I can't recollect having heard of the game from anyone except William, and I have certainly never had a copy of it reach my grubby paws! So if there's anyone out there playing Universe II — PLEASE drop me a line and I'll put you in touch with William.

And at last, a happy ending for Allen and Mark Errington of Durham. Correspondence from Allen and Mark has concentrated on Shadowgate an Uninvited for the past six months. They certainly seem to have been bitten by these two games, and reading their letters, I began to suspect that their entire lives had been taken over by them! But now all that has come to an end. Congratulations are in order for Allen and Mark, who have sent me 'official' printed completion certificates for both titles. Their perseverance has finally paid off — but as the prompt goes: What now?

Clues

WOLFMAN:
Look around twice when you climb up in the museum.

FRANKENSTEIN:
LIFT THE CREAKY FLOORBOARD!

LURKING HORROR:
Show the professor the note fond on the great dome. Horrify the urchin with a reincarnated hand!

FISH:
Find a dry route after casting.

LEISURE SUIT LARRY 2:
No passport when you need one? Visit Eve's again!

MANHUNTER:
Use the minimum successful Kewpie Doll sequence that you already know!

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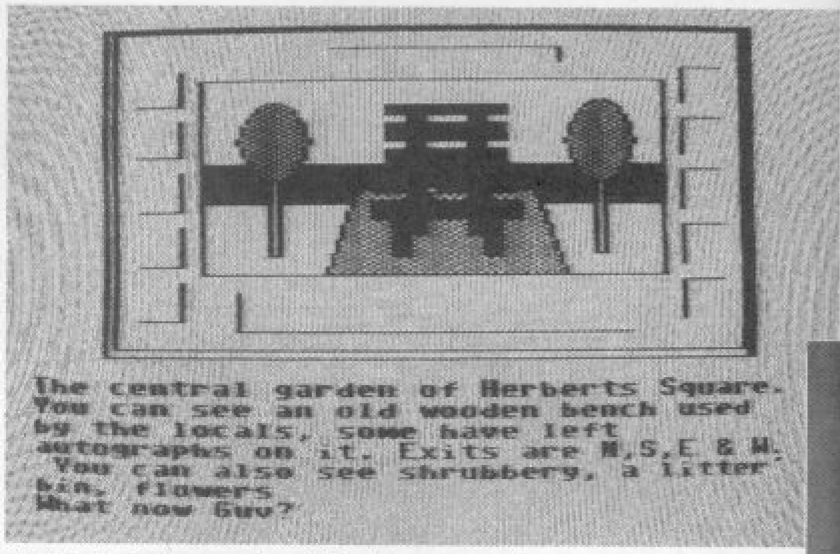
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DTP ☐

AGM

▶ Top Ten
▶ Spectrum; Commodore 64;
▶ Amstrad CPC;
▶ Cassette; £1.99
▶ Reviewer: Keith Campbell



▲ *Herbert Square in all its glory — yuk.*

DEADENDERS

This is a spoof of Eastenders, centred around the characters of Herbert Square. Effl's dog Willie has gone missing, and your first job is to find it. However, it turns out to have been literally flattened to death, and so the quest turns into a hunt for the killer.

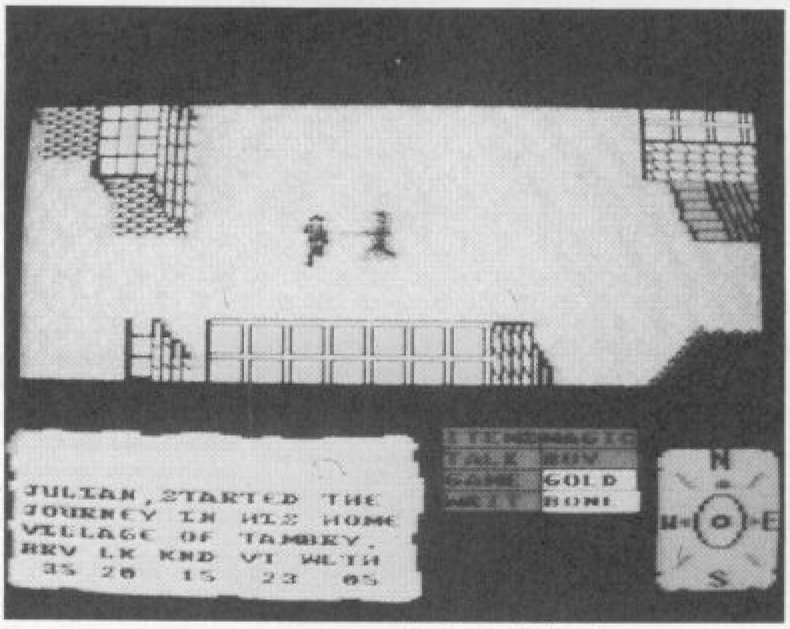
To follow up the mystery involves asking people about things. Most questions fail to yield useful information, making this a rather hit and miss affair, although some answers are designed to raise a few smiles — providing you know your EastEnder characters, who appear in this game under recognisable pseudonyms. All very punny, and fiendishly unoriginal.

This is a GACked adventure, with a rather poor vocabulary that shows off the GAC's gaspingly long response time to unrecognised words to its best advantage. There are a few graphics, flat uninteresting pictures of such fascinating things as park benches, washing machines, and a pub bar. Every so often the text background colour changes at the showing of a different picture, and your eyes have to make a quick adjustment to read the text comfortably.

Cassette adventurers starving for a game to run on their

FAER

▶ Activision/Microillusions
▶ Commodore 64 disk: £19.99
▶ Reviewed by: Keith Campbell



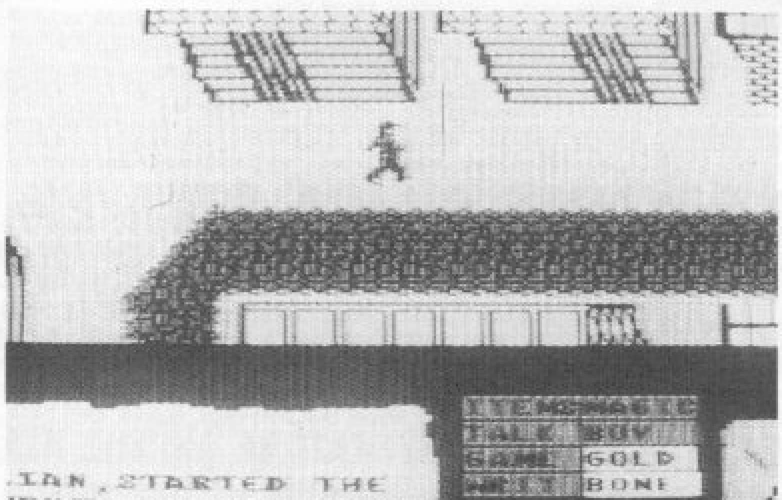
▲ *Faery Tale disappointment.*

Just released is a C-64 version of a Role Playing game downgraded from the 16-bit original on Amiga and PC. I say 'downgraded' as opposed to 'converted' because although I have not seen the game in its earlier incarnations, I find it hard to believe that any 16-bit game could be as clumsy to play as this version.

The objective is to rescue a Talisman, which requires the player to defeat the Necromancer (yawn). The player, in fact, is Julian, but should he die during his quest, one of his two brothers takes over. Lose them, and you have to start again.

Moving Julian and his family over semi-plan views of the fields and buildings is a pretty tame affair if you have just polished off Leisure Suit Larry, for the animation is minimal, and the pictures boring. Buildings can be entered and searched, but the disk loading response time for this is poor, and not visually rewarding when you get there, anyway. And it is all very well entering building after building, but it is

▼ *The Amiga version still shines.*



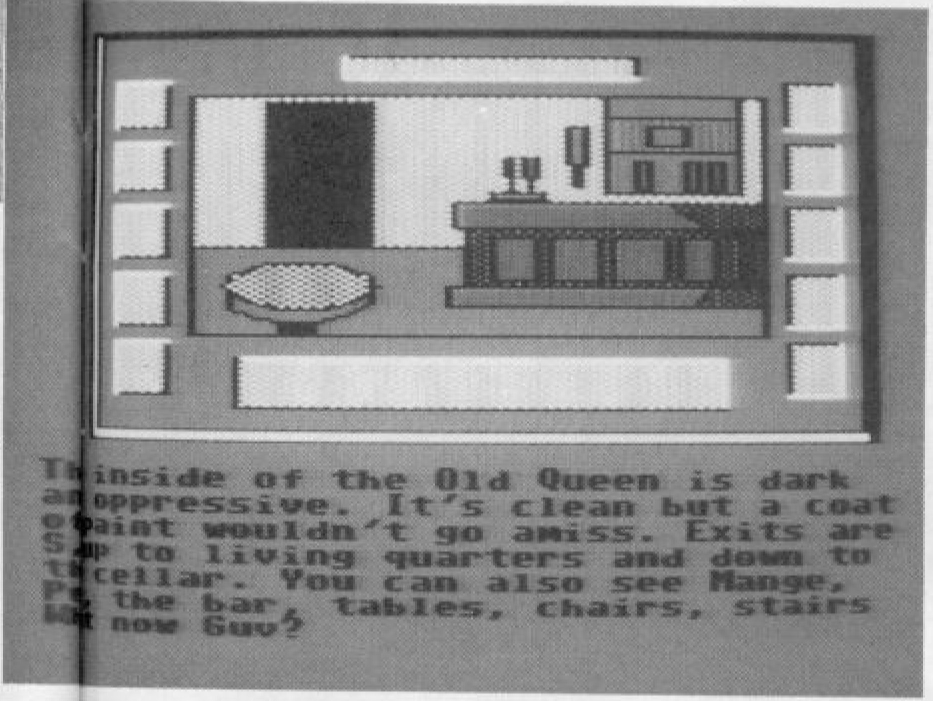
▼ *Julian (no relation) sets out on his quest.*



machines would do far better to get hold of some older previously unplayed titles, from the likes of Scott Adams, Brian Howarth, or Stefan Ufnowski.

▶ Vocabulary	45%
▶ Graphics	28%
▶ Playability	30%
▶ Value	49%
▶ **Overall**	**20%**

▼ *Fancy a drink at the Old Queen — not really.*

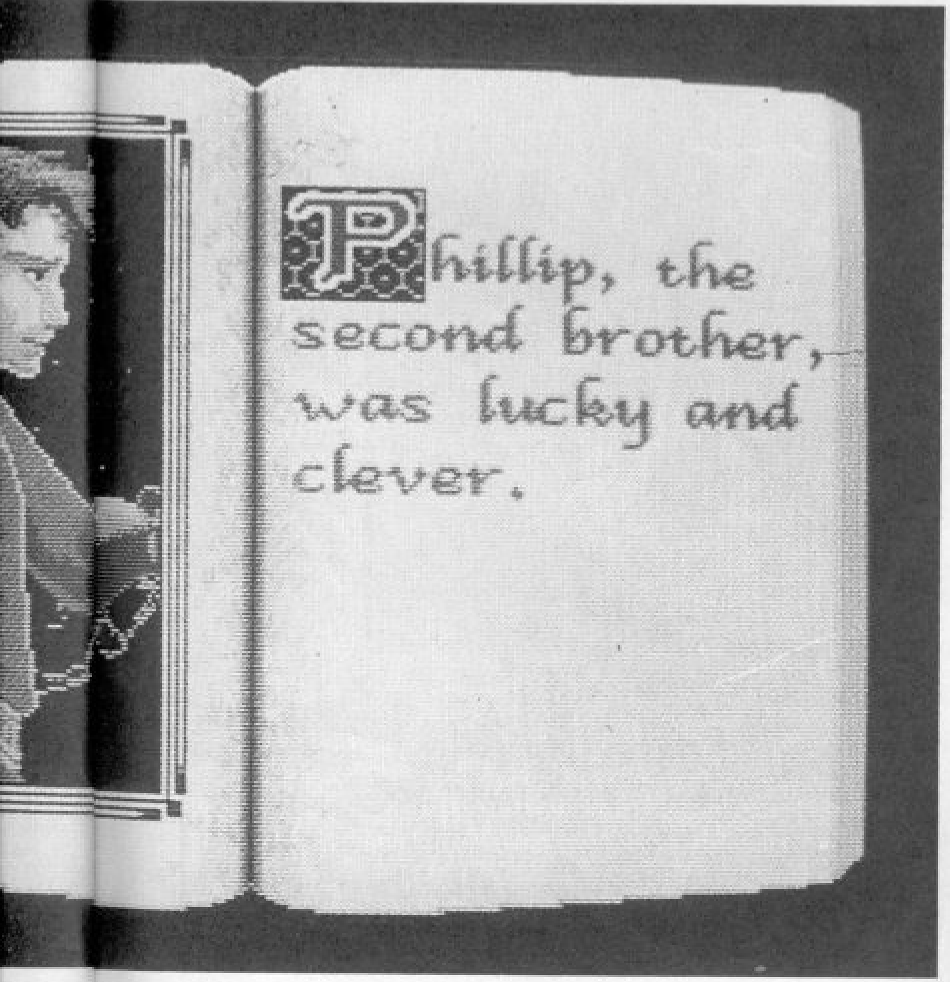




The first person to write in and tell us the name of this dog wins a C+VG T Shirt.

RY TALE ADVENTURE

t on his est.



all a bit mundane and boring without some sort of clue or purpose to provide interest and incentive.

But by far the worst feature of the game is the command and control system. Combat, as well as movement, is by joystick, but the control is too crude to do more than just juggle frantically, and hope you smash your enemy to a pulp. If, that is, you can recognise the enemy in time, for as characters approach there is no way of knowing if they are friend or foe until it is almost too late.

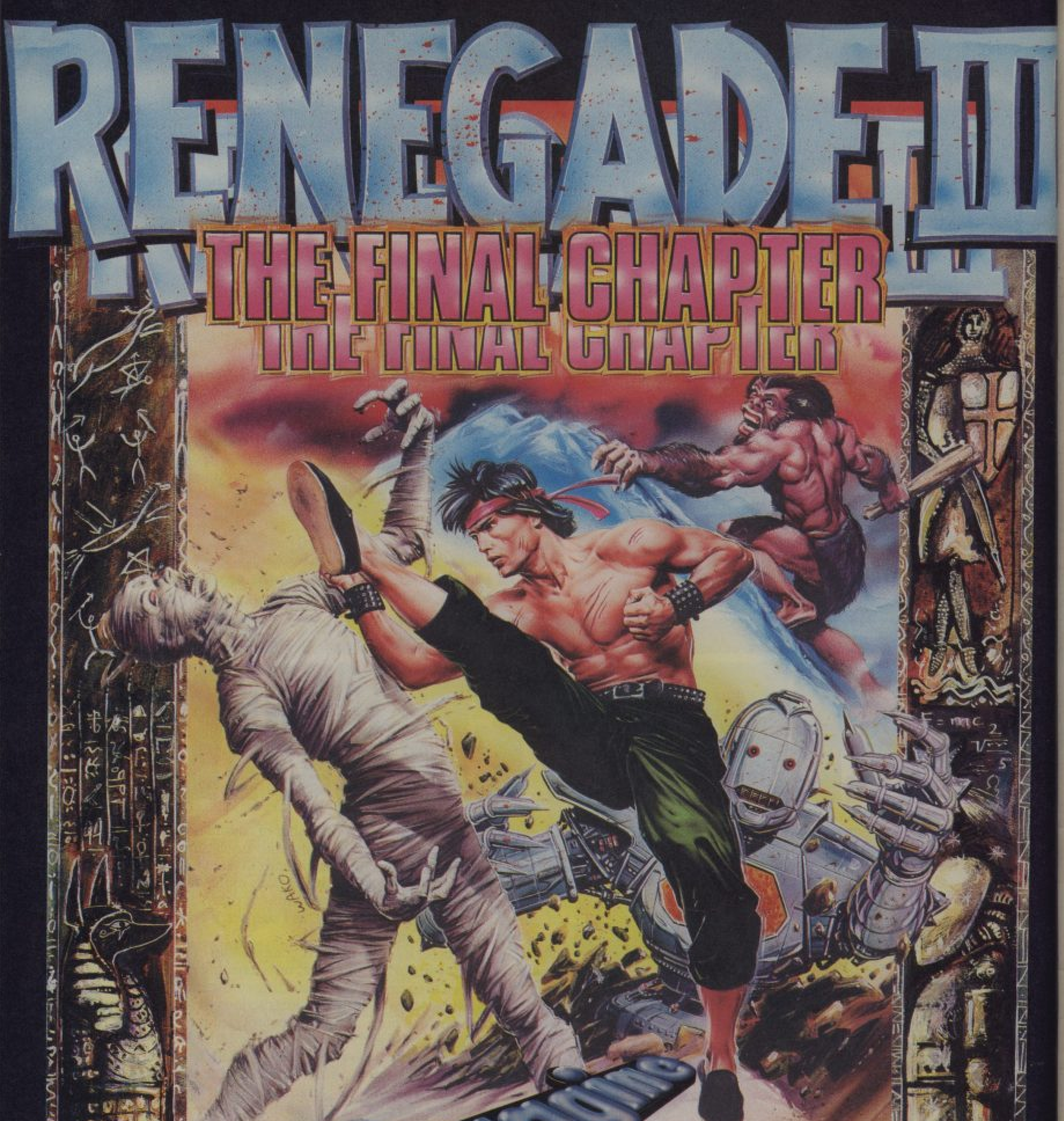
Alas, there is worse to come. Commands from a small on-screen menu can be entered by hitting the 'appropriate' key, but the scant instructions fail to explain this fully. Often the key hit will produce an entirely unexpected result. A number of commands seem completely unobtainable, and it is difficult to tell whether this is due to bugs in the program, omissions in the instructions, or, as I suspect, a mixture of both.

A combination of boring plot, uninteresting graphics, a frustrating command system, and instructions written by an incompetent, led me to turn off the 64 before I suffered irreparable brain damage. Yesterday's technology, yesterday's game. What a waste of two disks. Yawn . . .

RATINGS

▶ Vocabulary	n/a
▶ Graphics	39%
▶ Playability	11%
▶ Value	9%
▶ **Overall**	**5%**

AGM



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TITANICUS ADEPTUS

► **Games Workshop**
► **Price: £24.99**

Titanicus, is based around the combat between giant robots at the time of the Imperium in Warhammer 40K. These huge creatures are manned by a crew of around 5 space marines, who control its movement, fire its weapons and repair any damage it suffers.

Eight small polystyrene blocks, are used to represent buildings and the city terrain over which you will be fighting. The glossy box also contains six plastic Warlord Class Titans, two sets of spare weapons, two range rulers, two sheets of colour counters that represent damage and bursts of fire, a sixty page rulebook, twelve Titan cards and four six sided dice.

The model Titans need to be cut off a framework and constructed. All the models can be clipped together and no glue is required. Furthermore, all the supplied weapons are interchangeable — apart from the power fist which only fits into a Titans left arm. I found that some of the weapons, especially the ones that fit underneath the Titan, were prone to work their way loose and fall out after several games, but a small amount of Blue Tack applied to the end of a weapon soon stopped this happening.

Once you have assembled the Titans — and this requires a modicum of skill to release the models from their plastic framework — you will be ready to play the game.

To start off you should use the examples of pre constructed Titans that are supplied. By using these you will get to grips with the basic rules and learn to appreciate the advantages and dis-advantages of the combat system.

All in all the actual gaming system is easy to learn and simple to play. AT uses a strict sequence of play, which consists of turns. Each turn is split into five different phases, namely Order, Movement, Repair, Combat and End. In the Order phase each player selects one of the four Order Counters available and places it face down, next to their Titan.

This order largely determines what takes place in the remaining Phases. I don't have the space to detail the whole rules system, but anybody with a small amount of common sense could fathom it out without any problems. The game is logical, straightforward and easily understood. In fact I was impressed by the player — friendliness of the whole system which — for me — made the game immediately playable.

Obviously, the make-or-break factor in AT is the combat system, as the whole game is mainly based around fighting. I am therefore pleased to report that combat in AT is fast, fluid and fun, even if it is deadly! After playing the game several times, the whole gaming procedure will become second nature, as it is that easy to implement.

GW are renowned for supplying games that are complete in themselves, but are found sadly lacking when more advanced play is required. However, they have redressed the balance with AT as this game covers long range, intermediate and close combat all in one.

Furthermore there is a complete set of Advanced Rules for players who want to make their game that more realistic. The advanced rules allow Titans to carry a whole new range of lethal missiles, ranging from the powerful Plasma Missile — which splits into six warheads and causes immense damage due to an instantaneous release of seething plasma — to the Haywire Missile — which creates a huge electrostatic field, disrupting an opponents electrical systems in the process.

Also included in the Advanced Rules is a system allowing the crews of Titans to obtain experience levels. This gives the opportunity to players — who have their Titans manned by the more experienced crews — to make their opponents re-roll crucial dice rolls in critical situations, improving their overall odds.

If the crew reaches the highest experience level — Ace — they can begin to learn a whole range of new Skills, which give various advantanges to the Titans in their control. My only criticism here is that the Experience and Skill levels system could have been vastly improved with just a small amount of effort, creating a game with a bigger role playing element.

Although AT is a complete game in itself GW have obviously got rules expansion in mind, because this game is so obviously interlinked with their Warhammer 40k system that complete new rules for Titan to Rhino and Titan to Marine unit combat are only a stones throw away.

The idea of massive robots fighting it out for the pure hell of it is not unique. FASA have done it before with BattleTech and ICE have done it with Robot Warriors. However, GW have managed to come up with a new and interesting angle on this kind of warfare, which will appeal to a wide range of gamers. The rulebook is excellently detailed by several resident artists, including a brilliant cover by John Blanche, and true to form, GW supply a complete descriptive background to the game, making for more convincing play.

Although pricey at £25.00 AT is good value for money as — contents aside — the rules will give players many hours of tabletop entertainment. If you've got the spare cash, it's a purchase worth considering.

WAYNE

Value	80%
Playability	75%
Basic Rules	45%
Advanced Rules	50%
Presentation	95%
Overall	**85%**

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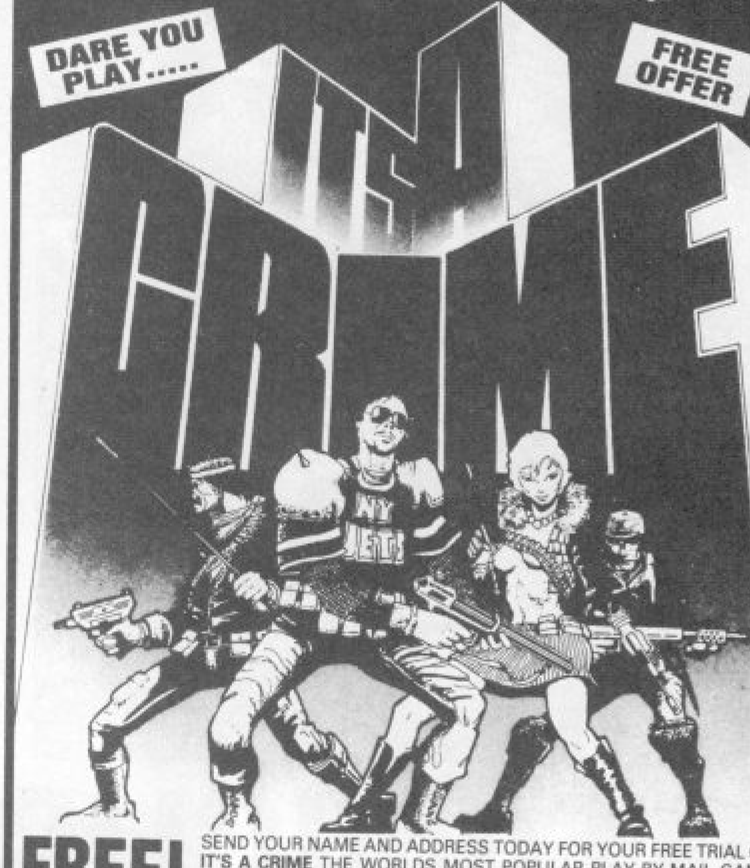
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CES-ER'S PALACE

There is more to Las Vegas than slot machines and neon lights. Nevada's sin city also plays host to the Winter Consumer Electronics Show. This monster trade convention is the showcase for all the latest electronic gadgets, TV'S, stereos, videos and computer games. Eugene Lacey was there to drool over the goodies.

If Sony, JVC and all the other giant electronic manufacturers get their way you won't want to leave the house pretty soon.

As far as leisure is concerned you won't need to. Imagine a TV twice the screen size and twice the picture quality of the one parked in your front room. Imagine a picture so clear that you can see the minutest details — scratches on cars, and the weave and texture of material in clothing. Consider that this TV can pick up literally dozens of stations — from sport, to news, to porn and even Daffy Duck. Anything you want to watch is there at the press of a button and in cinema-like picture quality. Add stereo sound, remote control, window overlays so you can check the other side, or sides, and watch one, or two, or three programmes at the same time. Plug your PC Engine in with its CD-ROM add-on and — well! None of this is sci-fi. It is all working now and on its way to the shops in the near future.

Even if you are not the indoor type and feel the need for some fresh air there is no need to leave your electronic playground at home. Everything comes in a pocket sized version — TV's, CD's and even Fax machines for the busy executive can be slipped inside your overcoat whilst you walk the dog.

Of course not everything being shown at the C.E.S. show is going to make it into mass production. I have serious doubts about an electronic toilet paper dispenser (What is there is a power cut?) and owning a power driven door mat hardly strikes me as a matter of life and death.

But that is what the C.E.S. is all about. There are plenty of turkeys in amongst the million sellers. A few years back the personal stereo was written off as a C.E.S. turkey — and now Walkman's, or Walkmen are annoying the hell out of people on tubes and buses the world over.

There is generally a bit of a buzz about the hot things at the show. You get into "did you see that thing" conversations in bars and bus queues, which are usually neatly rounded off by phrases like "wasn't it amazing" or "frightening isn't it?".

This year's frightening gadgets were the video-phoning. Imagine phone the wife from the pub next door. I mean if I'd had a few I might slip into the usual routine of "I won't be back for an hour love, I'm just finishing some screen shots for Mean Machines." Now that really is frightening'. Fortunately the company that make the video phone have so far only developed a still image prototype.

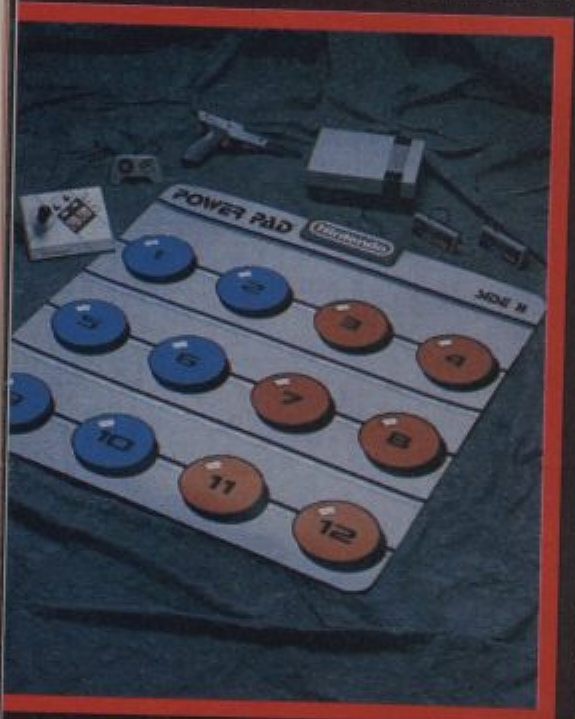
Still image video was very much to the fore on the Sony and JVC stands. Both companies have developed a still-image video camera that may well make conventional cameras a thing of the past. The Sony Mavica stores images on a tiny disk which can be used and re-used. When you have finished snapping you simply plug the camera into the TV to view. No processing is needed. At less than two hundred pounds these cameras were definitely considered show 'goers'.

Not quite a goer — but definitely a show stopper — was the golden car on the Phillips stand. The Royale is described in the show guide as a 'concept' car. developed by a British company based in Worthing called I.A.D. the

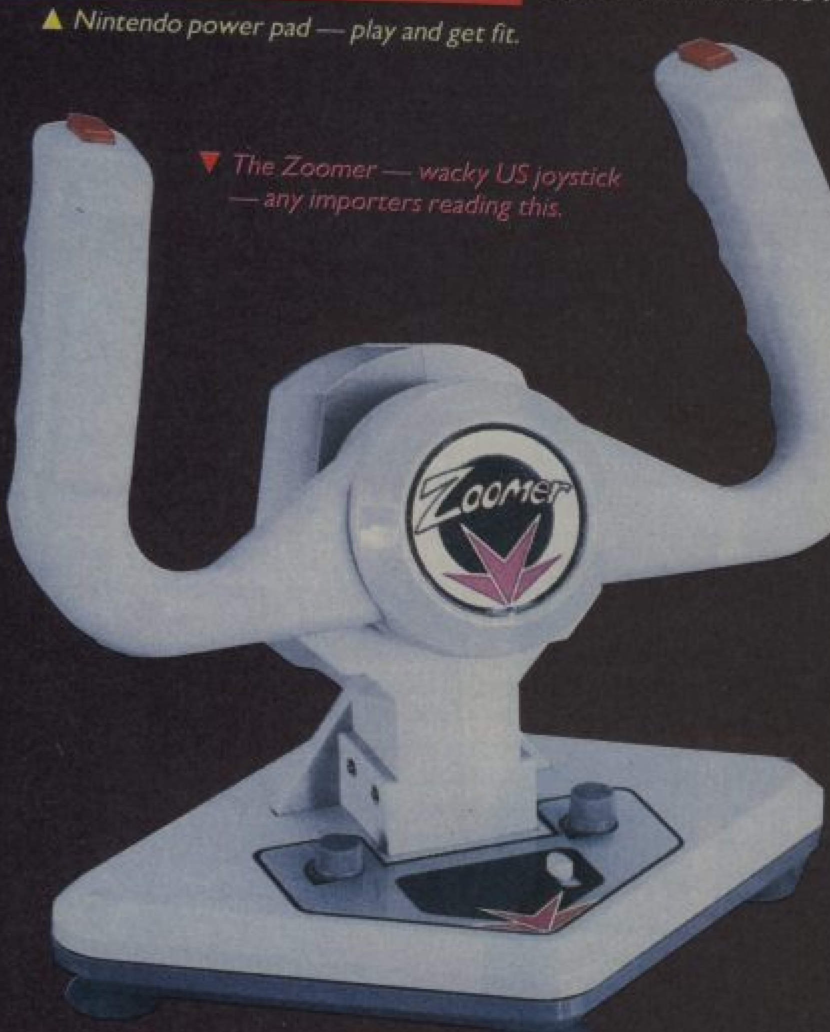
CES-
PA

Royale is a customised Subaru 2.7 litre saloon. Fitted with just about everything even the flashiest of techno-yuppies could desire. We are talking state-of-the-art electronics on-board. Secreted amongst the Royale's stylish cream leather interior are no less than thirteen speakers for the CD driven music system, two telephones, two televisions mounted in the back and a third in the front, a specially-developed car computer with enlarged LCD display, a Fax, seats, windows, exterior mirrors — the whole darned lot is push-button controlled. Even the map book is electronic thanks to the Carin Navigation System. The navigator stores all of the pages of the guide on laser disk and displays the page you require on an LCD display.

If the Royale was one of the bigger show stoppers there were plenty of smaller ones to catch your eye as well. In fact, smallness and slimness appear to be an abiding obsession with most exhibitors. Somehow, if your gadget is smaller, slimmer, lighter, ideally water proof and multi-coloured as well then you have an enormous sales advantage. It makes sense though. I mean even Deputy C+VG Editor Julian Rignall doesn't leave the house before slipping his portable colour Fergusson into his pocket before making his way to the train. He tells me there is no shortage of fellow commuters watching Neighbours over his shoulder on the 5.45 from Farringdon to Brighton as he travels home after a hard day on the PC Engine.



▲ *Nintendo power pad — play and get fit.*



▼ *The Zoomer — wacky US joystick — any importers reading this.*

Games wise the C.E.S belonged to one company — Nintendo. Their football pitch-sized stand dominated the West Hall where the computer and video games companies hung out.

Just about anybody who is anybody in the Japanese coin-op world was showing a range of games for the Nintendo. Capcom, Taito, Namco, Tengen, Data East, S.N.K. — they were all there with games like Dragon Ninja, Paper Boy, Double Dragon, Ikari Warriors and Guerilla War. In fact any game that got anywhere in the arcades is now available for Nintendo. It would be easier to list the ones that aren't than to list the ones that are.

But it's not just arcade games. There's a whole batch of film licenses including Beetlejuice, Friday the 13th, A Nightmare on Elm Street, the Karate Kid and Who Framed Roger Rabbit and many more.

The huge number of games for Nintendo that are available in the US is in stark contrast to the situation in the UK — where there are currently less than twenty titles available. The reason for this is a world shortage of the chips used to manufacture the cartridges. However, Nintendo are about to bring new chip making facilities on stream and guarantee more games will be available in the UK before the end of '89.

The swelling catalogue of


▲ *The power glove — ultimate controller.*





▲ *Citizen have the sexiest pocket CD's.*



▼ *The U Force — beat 'em up fans controller.*



titles available in the US is possible because of the huge number of potential purchasers. There are currently eleven million Nintendo players in the US. Three titles launched last year sold over two million units each — Mike Tyson's Punch Out, Legend of Zelda, and Super Mario Bros. Not surprisingly this tends to put the Amiga, ST and Commodore 64 games scene firmly in the shade.

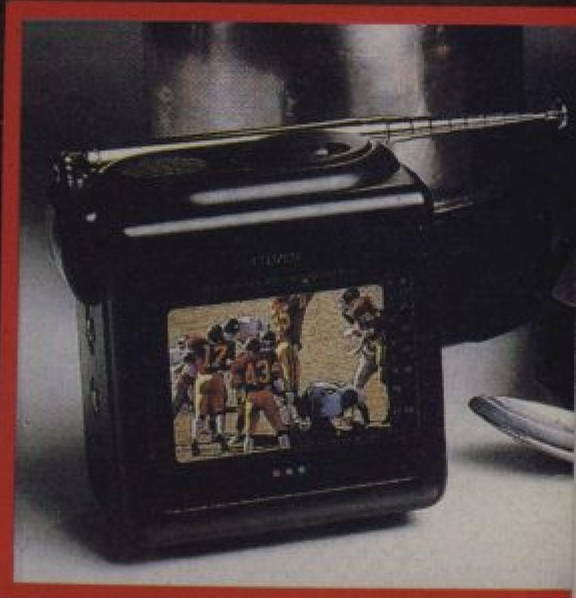
This is a great shame as there are stacks of interesting, innovative games coming through from a variety of companies.

One of my favourites is Sim City from Broderbund. The game casts you as Lord Mayor of one of seven of the world's most famous cities. You are challenged to improve the quality of life for your citizens by tackling such urban problems as pollution, traffic congestion, crime, and overcrowding. No mention of traffic wardens, though.

Cinemaware won the wind-up of the show award — for their CD-driven sound enhancement of Defender of the Crown on the PC. The West Coast company have long been rumoured to be working on C.D.I. games — so when the invitations were sent out to view the fist CD enhancement of a computer game a lot more was expected than a few extra sound effects stored on CD and synchronised to run with the game. No improvements in the graphics department at all. What a disappointment. It was not all bad news from Cinemaware though as the company are promising to increase the output of there extremely high quality games this year. Ones to watch out for are TV Sports Basketball and Lords of the Rising Sun.

Epyx latest games were over shadowed by the rumours circulating about the new 'Project X' being shown to big-time buyers behind the scenes on their stand. The California-based company are saying nothing at all about their new baby — refusing to confirm or deny the main rumour that it is a hand-held video games system. Whatever this gizmo turns out to be there was also a couple of games on display which suggest that the firm still have their feet firmly in the arcade adventure business. Devon Aire in the Hidden Diamond Caper introduces a cat burglar (Devon Aire) in a graphically superb arcade puzzler. Not quite Impossible Mission — but pretty good just the same.

Showing that they too can cut it in the innovation stakes Activision, sorry Mediagenic, were showing Man Hole running on the Macintosh with Hypercard. The user base of Mac owners with Hypercard (a go faster add-on) must be about half a dozen in the UK. Man Hole is none the less impressive for that. It really is like exploring a worl like Alice in Wonderland where animals talk to you when you click on to them with the cursor.



▲ *Smallest TV — a neat 'match box' gizmo.*

It is huge. I explored it for an hour and didn't once get back to the same location. I don't know how many graphics are stored in Man Hole but it did appear pretty infinite to me. Activision were also launching their range of Sega titles and very nice they looked too including Rampage, Cyborg Hunter (Reviewed in Mean Machines) and Ghost Busters.

Infocom were the other main highlight of the Mediagenic stand. The Boston outfit have now thrown off their rather snobbish puritan-like commitment to text-only adventures by launching a range of graphically excellent role playing games. Pretty soon we will be carrying reviews of Journey, Battletech, and Quarterstaff — the Tomb of

CONT.



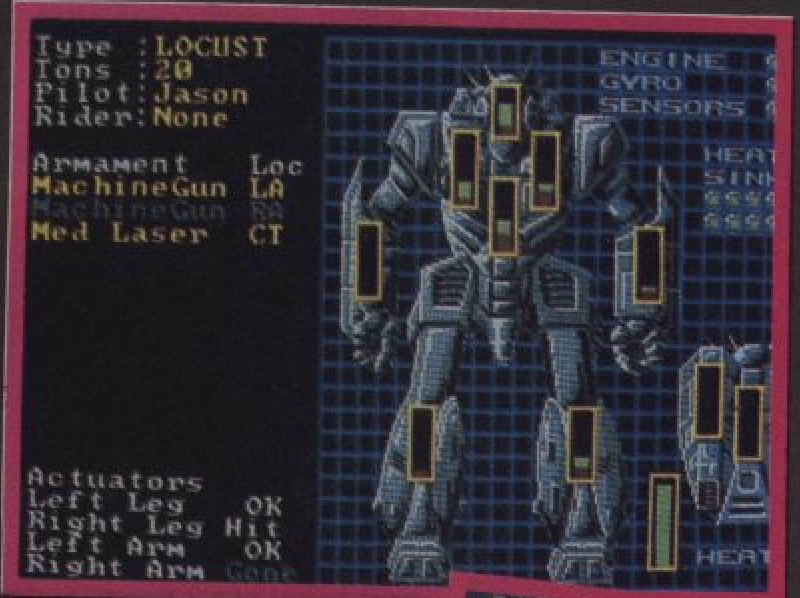
▲ Nintendo breakfast cereal — yum, yum.

CES-ER'S PALACE

Setmoth in AGM. Shogun also has graphics and looks like a pretty mean adventure as well.

But there was more than just software to turn a gamers head at the C.E.S. I have never seen such a wide range of joysticks and add-ons at a show. The Beeshu stand featured no less than 37 sticks for a variety of computers and video games systems. Apart from the usual assortment of multi-coloured sticks and remote control sticks there was also The Zoomer — available for the Sega, Nintendo, ST and C64. This handle bar like stick has fire buttons mounted on its two grippers and is just the ticket for games like Star Glider and Top Gun.

By far the most impressive of the controllers on display



▲ Battletech — Infocom go role playing.

was Broderbund's U-Force. So far only available for Nintendo the U-Force is the most radical development in controllers since video gaming was invented.

You don't need to hold anything. In boxing games for example you simply sit or stand in front of your U-Force and throw punches at it. The U-Force interprets these movements and translates them into the

▼ The Royale has electric everything.

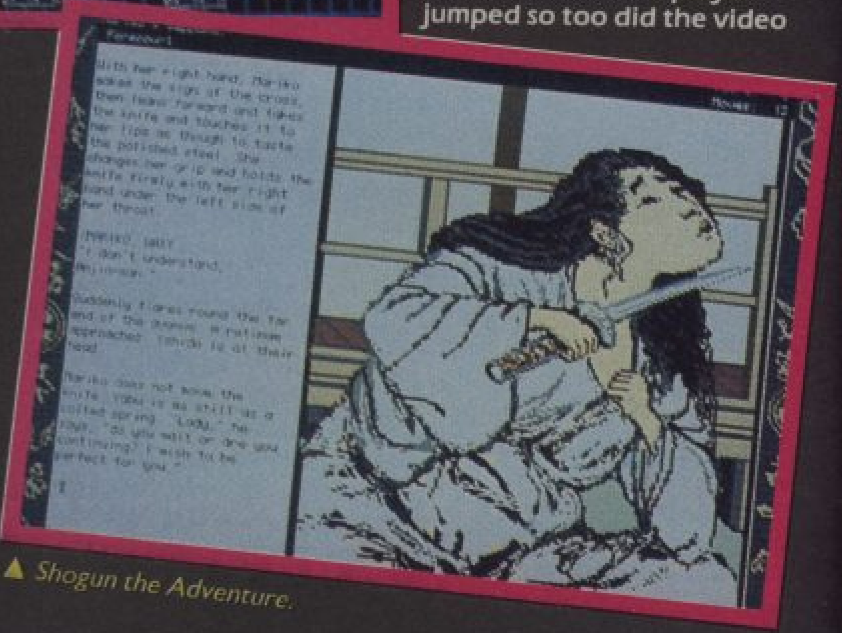


game on screen. This was most effectively demonstrated in the Nintendo game Mike Tyson's Punch-Out with the gamer flooring Tyson at one point with a mighty right hand swing. It adds a definite touch of realism in beat 'em up games but was also demonstrated with driving games and arcade adventures where it seemed equally effective.

Broderbund are not saying when it will be available in Europe or if there will be a U-Force for other systems.

Not to be outdone by the U-Force were Mattel with their Power Glove. Slip the glove on and the movement of your hand dictates the action of object and characters on screen via sensors that "perceive hand and finger movements in three dimensional space." Going one step further than the U-Force the Power Glove. will have a range of games developed especially for it — to capitalise on the increased control that the glove offers games players. The first of these is "Bad Street Brawler" which will be launched in the US in the Autumn.

Also breaking new ground in controllers — though again Nintendo only at this stage — is the Power Pad. This novel controller reads game moves from the players feet as the player steps on numbered circles on a mat. The game was demonstrated with athletics games like Hyper Sports where a player ran on the spot to make the game athlete run. As the player jumped so too did the video



▲ Shogun the Adventure.

game athlete. Nintendo were singing the praises of the Power Pad at C.E.S. claiming that you could use your Nintendo to keep fit as well as enjoying the game.

But if the add-ons and controllers are getting strange you ain't seen nothing yet. A whole merchandisie industry is mushrooming around Nintendo. Most stockists now carry a range of spinoffs from Mario sweat shirts, pencil cases, and bags to combs and even sheets. Weirdest of all though is the recent announcement of a Nintendo-endorsed breakfast cereal. That's America for you.



The spring is sprung, the grass is riz — we wonder where the YOBBO is. Well, he's in the C+VG offices opening another bulging Gro-bag of mail, that's where. If you've got a moan, groan, compliment, complaint — or just have something silly or witty to say, send your letter to THE YOB, MAILBAG, C+VG, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. If, in his infinite wisdom, the YOB thinks your letter is fab 'n' brill, he'll send you a stonking good C+VG t-shirt. So what are you waiting for — get writing.

Dear YOB,
After reading C+VG we thought that the PC Engine was a superb machine. So we went to see friend who had one and we saw Galaga 88. We were really impressed, but he only had Galaga 88 so we decided to make a trip to Munich to see Games World where they sell PC Engines. We arrived at Games World totally exhausted and asked the shop keeper to show us the Engine. After some problems with the voltage we started to play R-Type. We were not impressed, because you said that it is exactly the same as the coin-op. But we didn't think it was.

Then we played a lot of awful games like Legendary Axe, Pinball, Chan and Chan, World Court Tennis and Dragon Spirit. Then we played Victory Run — and that was another disappointment. The only game that comes near the coin-op is Galaga 88. So we went home without a PC Engine. How much money did you get from NEC to print good reviews?
Patrick Coolwijk, 5367 AD Macharen, Holland.

YOB: Either you're blind or stupid. Any idiot can see that the PC Engine is by far the best games machine currently available. I honestly can't understand you saying that R-Type isn't like the original. I know for a fact that the arcade fiend Rignall practices the game at home on his Engine, then nips down to his local arcade in Brighton to knock up a highscore, and he says he uses exactly the same tactics. It's our opinion — and we're not alone — that R-Type is 98% faithful to the original machine. If I was you I'd stick to tulip-picking and Edam-eating — you obviously don't know an amazing machine when you see one.

Dear YOB,
I get your magazine every month, but I feel like cancelling it. I own a Sega and every time you give away a game, it's either for the Amstrad, C64 or Spectrum — but never for the Sega or Nintendo. Before you shout at me for saying that they cost too much, remember Sega cards are only £14.95. So please give away a Sega card.
Robin Freeman, Edinburgh.

YOB: Tapes are easily mass-produced — if we were to give away a Sega card, we'd have to pay £15 for each one, and that added to the cost of sticking a card to each magazine would push the cover price up to a mere £17. Next time you write to complain, make sure your brain's not in neutral.

Dear YOB,
Please could you send me a list of C16/+4 POKEs and cheats.
Howard Black, Aberdeen.

YOB: No.

Dear YOB,
Please send me a POKE for Commando on the C64. If you can't, can any reader help me? Send it to 1 Lynors Avenue, Strood, Kent.
Colin Crampton, Strood.

YOB: No I can't. Can anyone?

Dear YOB,
At last, someohe dares to speak up, Thankyou Kenneth Jackson! Living in Israel where the Sega is second only to those ancient PC's, I can't help noticing the kind of hype this machine is receiving — and it doesn't deserve it either. Both popular consoles are feeble when compared with most 16-bit micros.

You say titles like Super Mario Bros still put the majority of 16-bit games to shame — you said it and made my day! SMB vs Baal? Great Football vs TV Sports Football. Top Gun vs Falcon? Oh yeah, sure . . . you're the ones that ought to open your eyes.
Lior Meiry, Haifa, Israel.

YOB: SMB is a million times better than Baal! You could go on for hours arguing about 16-bit and console games. You list the finest examples of 16-bit games — but the quote was 'the majority' — there are still a lot of crummy 16-bit games out there. Generally speaking, new console games (Salamander, Vulcan Venture, Double Dragon, Track and Field II etc) are all extremely good. You list old games!

Dear YOB,
Cut down on the black and white pages. Your mag is turning out to look like a newspaper. A few more colours perhaps?
Bruno Amorelli, Waltham Cross, Herts.

YOB: Your wish is my command, matey. As from next issue, C+VG will have full-colour reviews — and will generally have more colour than a test card.

Dear YOB,
Thanks for the free game in your February issue. Like many other console owners, I found it very interesting to look at, along with my 20-odd other freebies. . . almost worth buying a Spectrum for! But I think I have another solution for us 100,000+ console owners.

Either give money-off vouchers for cartridges and cards, or increase the size of the Mean Machine section, with news, charts, features and more reviews, including PC Engine titles.

I'm sure it would go down well, as more different machines will be available in

the near future.

On a 'lighter' side, your infamous Garry Williams is obviously very intelligent to support Arsenal, as they are the pinnacle of English football today. What is Garry's official capacity to the nearest stone.
Michael Gregory, Cullompton, Devon.

YOB: The money off vouchers sounds interesting — and could, I am told, become a reality in the future. Keep looking. The Mean Machines column will grow with the consoles — and we're doing plenty of features, so you've got nothing to moan about there. PC Engine reviews have just started this month, and, Rignall assures me, will continue. I think our consoles news is second to none — and the only reason why we don't print a console chart is because nobody does one at present. The future of Mean Machines is looking rosier and rosier — just watch it. Lastly, the only reason why Garry Williams is an Arsenal supporter is because they've got the only ground with doors wide enough to let him through, and big enough seats to house his massive expansive behind. His weight is classified, I'm afraid, and I can't even give an approximation to the nearest tonne. Sorry.

Dear YOB,
Why, why, why is poor old Garry Williams being insulted because he's fat? The jokes (?) in the March issue of C+VG were very crap and stupid. Even if it was a competition. I am 14 years old and very fat and proud of it. I think Garry should be a reviewer as well.
Ian Rothwell, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

YOB: We don't take the mick out of gargantuan Garry just 'cos he's fat. We take the mickey 'cos he's fat, loathesome and obnoxious. And because nobody likes him.

Dear YOB,
Could you tell me if Sega are converting Super Hang-On to the master system?
Jason Samuel, Aberdare, Mid Glam.

YOB: Yes: no.

Dear YOB,
Recently I was bored and was forced, though I am now totally ashamed of it, to read another computer magazine, and was horrified to see that it said that the ST sound chip is poor compared with that of the Commodore 64.

Please tell me whether this is true.
Craig Dave, Wallasey, Merseyside.

YOB: I'm afraid you'll have to top yourself, old chum — it's true.

Dear YOB,
In the resurgence of speculation regarding software pricing and piracy, I thought I'd better voice my opinion on the subject and make a prediction. Way back in the heady days of the rubber-keyed 48K Spectrum, the name of the great Ultimate Play the Game was on all ZX lips. They were THE leading games company, and their software, priced at £5.50, was second to none.

Imagine, then, the outcry when Ultimate released Sabre Wulf, a decent enough game, but at a price of £9.95 — almost twice as dear as its predecessor Atic Atac. Can you imagine it? You'll have to, because there wasn't one, save for a few disgruntled software reviewers. The general consensus of opinion, though, was that, okay, it's a little dear, but it IS Ultimate after all — and it did take six months to write.

At that time I, being youthful of mind and all, ignored the nagging thoughts that warned me of a prospective rise in software to come, and of course I was wrong. For within a further six months, Sabre Wulf, selling in large quantities, triggered off a chain reaction within the industry, and the price of software rose by at least three pounds. That more or less brings us up to date. Yes, I know an average Spectrum game costs about a pound less than its C64/Amstrad counterparts, but nowadays you still get very little change from a tenner for a full-price 8-bit game.

And now I think the same thing is happening again. The compilation packages are the first to weigh in at anything from £12.95 upwards, and although some may argue that 10 games or more for £13 is still good value, it has to be said that very few compilations have games of equally high or low value throughout. The question is — would you really pay £3 extra for some games that you'll never play? I think not.

But if the argument is a little weak on the compilation front, I have recently seen Microprose Soccer on sale for £15 — on cassette. I admit that in this case there are different types of footy to play, but surely this can't justify an extra fiver being slapped on. If this policy carries on throughout the industry, and frankly after my experiences I'd say there is a strong possibility of this. Then a disk-based game will damage the pocket as much as the already overpriced 16-bit games. Indeed, at a time when 16-bit games really need to drop a little off their price, an 8-bit surge will hardly be encouraging, will it?

I don't know — maybe I'm wrong and these are mere isolated incidents. But if it isn't and if the next crappy Christmas conversions weigh in at £15 a throw, you'll know where you heard it first. You have been warned.
Stephen Trask, Rochdale, Lancs.

YOB: One thing you fail to mention is the budget market. Back in the olden days when games were a mere £5.50, the budget market didn't exist. In these days of overpricing, the budget market is booming, with loads of high quality games costing a mere £2. Having said that, software IS expensive — but there are plenty of games which ARE worth the asking price. But the crux of the matter comes down to the fact that you don't HAVE to buy a game if you don't think it's worth the money. In fact you'd be stupid if you did. If next year's 'crappy' Christmas conversions are £15 you really would be a dumb klutz if you actually bought them.

Dear YOB,
I own an MSX and I was angry when you stopped doing the MSX-tra section. I buy C+VG not only hoping for MSX-tra, but for news about games and PBM's. At school my friends say the MSX is crap, but I think it's just as good as the C64 and Spectrum. Please restart the MSX-tra section and tell me and others what you think of the MSX.
Jeffrey Richardson, Sunderland.

YOB: The MSX is a neat little machine — but we don't cover it because it's got such a miniscule user base. There are more BBC, Electron, C16 and Atari 8-bit owners out there — so it wouldn't be fair just to run an MSX-only column. Sorry, Norry.

Dear YOB,
I am fully ashamed on your mag. It said in January's issue that 'there was to be given away a free demo, and we think it will be a great hit'. You must be joking. I can think of far more better games than Brainstorm. Please could you not be so much I know your just doing it to sell your mag.
Bruno Amorelli, Waltham Cross, Herts.

YOB: I'm fully ashamed 'on' you matey boots! E-for your English, and a black mark for wingeing without cause.

Dear YOB,
I'm writing to you because I would like all your latest info (posters and a magazine). So I would be grateful if you could send me stuff. I also would like more Sega magazines in the shops. What have people got to order in a shop? It's rediculous.
Mario Samo.

YOB: What do you think I am? A blinkin' charity or something?? I don't give out any freebies, unless you send me loads of dosh or something equally desirable — like a beautiful sister if you've got one. Anyway, you forgot to include your name and address, so even if I did want to send you something, I couldn't. By the way, D-for your English.

Dear YOB,
Whilst I was in an arcade in Whitby I saw an Outrun Sim and went over to it. I hadn't seen an Outrun for ages, so in I got, banged in 30p, selected the tune, but when I set off I moved the wheel to the left and the s@@*ing car



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WORLD BEATERS
U.S. Gold Ltd., Units 2/3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX.



went right. And the gears were opposite too! This has really put me off Outrun, and I haven't been on it since.

Anyway, your mag is a STONKING good read.
Chris Rigg, Harrogate, N. Yorks.

YOB: There's nothing worse than putting your dosh into a machine and finding it doesn't work. The other thing that makes me seethe is when arcade owners don't renovate their machines properly — pinball machines with faulty flippers, coin-ops that don't have all eight joystick directions, and crappy fire buttons often tempt me to put my boot into the coin slot. If you bought a Mars bar, you wouldn't expect it not to have any chocolate on it, would you — it's exactly the same thing with coin-ops. When I put in my money, I expect a full-working game that I can enjoy.

Dear YOB,
I read every C+VG that I can get. Usually I read it the same day it comes to Finland. C+VG is a good magazine, but it has one problem. My hobby is PBM games, and C+VG has information about PBM games on only one page. I believe that PBM games need two or three pages — even more! Most of my friends agree with me.
Mikko Mantyla, 00170 Helsinki.

YOB: A for your English, but I think PBM gets far too much coverage already!! They just smell too funny, and are too vicious — well, my Mongoose is, especially when I play by it.

Dear YOB,
I currently own a brill Nintendo, but I am worried that with the Konix console, the Atari ST console, the PC Engine and Sega 16-bit all coming out soon, my Nintendo will be forgotten about. Please reassure me that it won't!
Joshua Galaun, Wimbledon.

YOB: Well, Josh, me old mate, I'd like to be able to reassure you, but . . . Oh dear, oh dear . . . Nah. I'm only joking! The other consoles you mention might have the edge technically, but the standard of Nintendo games does seem to be on the up and up (witness Gradius this issue!) and the vast user base in the US should ensure a steady flow of new titles for a few years to come. So don't worry — be happy!

Dear YOB,
I am writing to see if you would send me one of your fab C+VG T-shirts. They're so good I'd resort to anything, even flattery — viz: Your mag is exquisitely comprehensive in all forms FAX to AGM to Mean Machines. It is the bestest games mag around in the whole universe.

Doesn't phase you, huh? Well. I'll have to resort to brutality. If you don't give me a T-shirt I'll break all your arms and legs and shove a copy of Commodore User down yer throat!

Not threatened? Okay, okay, you win, I'll have to resort to grovelling. Oh, please, please, please, please may I have one of your wonderful, stonking good T-shirts? I shall greatly treasure the T-shirt and it will be one of my most prized possessions, and as an added bonus it would be good advertising and this single freebie would doubtless compel my fellow Australians to order one.

So how about it? Did I earn one?
Jason George, Victoria, Australia.

YOB: No. No. No. No. No. No. No. If you think they're that good — buy one.

Dear YOB,
I have wrote (sic) to say "I am not very pleased with Playmasters." Why do you just pick C64 cheats and pokes? You rarely print Amstrad cheats and pokes (I myself have an Amstrad). I am very disappointed but I forgive you on one condition — you print more Amstrad cheats next month. I have sent some tips for Harrier Attack to get you started.
David Cornwall, Sorghall, Chester.

YOB: Cor! Flippin heck! Tips for Harrier Attack!?! Stop the presses, Jaz! Look, Dave, if we received any decent Amstrad tips we would print them, wouldn't we? Obviously C64 and Spectrum owners are much better at hacking than Amstradders. CPC owners prove me wrong or face the scorn of the YOB!

Dear YOB,
Crawl . . . ramble . . . blah . . . fawn . . . etc.
Reiner Wald, Rathausgasse 14, 5300 Bonn 1, W Germany.
PS
Now I've got a totally different question.

Until the beginning of February '89 I could watch the English TV programme, SKY Channel. Then they changed it to Eurosports and SKY Channel can only be seen in the UK. Just then SKY started to broadcast the Dolly Parton Show from the USA at 6:30 on Sunday evening. I really went crazy because I'm a great fan of Dolly Parton.

So, now I want to ask if someone in the UK would be so kind as to record the show for me on VHS video (I am willing to pay). I'm so desperate because here in Germany our boring TV channels will never send these shows.

Thanks a lot.

YOB: Sorry I didn't print your letter Reiner, but it was a bit too crawly for my liking. However, your PS was most entertaining. Doesn't it just go on to prove what people say about it "taking all sorts", readers? Oh, well . . . Anyone who can help Reiner, please get in touch. This has been a Reader Service Announcement.

Play Masters

It is with a smiling countenance that I bring you this month's Playmasters. For along with a splendiferous selection of low-down cheats, sexy POKEs and wholesome hints, we also premiere THE PLAYMASTERS, the definitive UK highscores table that covers all aspects of the gaming hemisphere. If you have some tips, hints or maps, send them in via Her Majesty's postal services, making sure your envelope is addressed to PLAYMASTERS, C+VG, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. There's a big bundle of software on offer to the senders of the finest tips of the month. This month Mr Barry Monger of Hayes in the the shire of Middlesex walks off with a stonking great package of goodies. Who knows, next month it could be your turn . . .



Julian Rignall

MUNSTERS

Those Doughnut Cracking boys! Do they ever stop their hacking japes? Apparently not, for one of their number — The Breaker — supplied a whole host of happy hacks, amongst them this set of C64 reset pokes for Again Again's horrific game. Load it, hit the button and POKE 2176, 3 to change the speed of the game (you can try any number between 0 and 5). POKE 6422,208 gives you infinite energy. Not to restart the game, type 2048,216: POKE 2049,120: POKE 2050, 32 (RETURN), then SYS 2048 (RETURN).

PACMANIA

Another Breaker poke, this time for the C64 version of this wunnerful little game. Load, reset and enter POKE 28520, 165 (RETURN), then SYS 14336 (RETURN) and the game should restart with infinite lives freely available.

GAPLUS

Wot a triffic conversation this was, and here's The Breaker of Doughnut Cracking Services to lend a helping hand in the form of an infinite lives poke. Load the game, hit that reset button and type POKE 32496,173 (RETURN) followed by SYS 4099 (RETURN), and in the words of Ron Pickering, "away you go!"

TARGET RENEGADE

In case you Spectrum owners are feeling left out, here's a tip especially for you. Infinite lives are yours for the taking in the Speccy version of this funky old beat 'em up. Get to the high score table, hold down CAPS SHIFT and B and you should get an asterisk. The level where you died should reappear, but without colour, so start playing again and when you move on to the next screen the colour should return, along with infinite lives! Simon Eden of Stretham is the person to thank for that one.



▲ *Ghostly help is at hand.*

R-TYPE

Jas from Omagh, N. Ireland, Glenn Finnigan and Craig Moore of Ilchester and David Mitchell from Pettswood all sent in this cheat for the ST version of the fabby shoot 'em up. Load the game as usual, then when you're asked to insert disk B hold down the HELP key and type ME. Press the up-arrow key and put the second disk in the drive to continue. Hit the space bar to begin and you can use the following keys for some wacky effects:

- **F5 toggles between invulnerability from aliens and walls.**
- **F6 toggles invulnerability from alien fire.**
- **F7 infinite credits.**
- **F8 gives mouse control of the pod, making for a pretty good two player game.**

SDI

Another ST cheat revealed by Jas of Omagh which lets you select levls simply by pressing the function keys. Get yourself onto SDI's high score table and type ALERIC. Now you should be able to go where no man has gone before!

DALEY THOMPSON'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE

Reading's own Paul Bennett, and our regular tipster-type, Kingsley Hyam have a petite cheat for the Amiga version of Ocean's arm-wrestler. Load the game and get yourself onto the high-score table, then type in HINGSEN-J (use the "-" on the numeric keypad. Press the DEL key and thelegend "DEMO!!!" should appear on the top of the screen. Now type "-J." and press the DEL key again and "MEGA-DEMO" should appear, and lo, you can partake in the event of your choice simply by pressing a function key. And with three cans of Lucozade to boot!

REVENGE OF DOH

Kingsley Hyam reckons that if you boot the Amiga version of this game, while holding down the left mouse button, you will be presented with the title screen from Peter Johnson's forthcoming conversion of Robocop. Coo!

FUSION

A rather jolly cheat mode for a rather jolly Amiga game from the programmers of this month's mega-game, Populous. Start the game as per usual, collect the ship then fly to the top-left of the playing area, where you should get back in the buggy and drive into the corner. Now type in "STONKER" and re-enter the ship. If you now press D, you will cycle through the available weapons, and pressing C puts you on the next level. Repeat this process on the second level and you will be able to fly through walls if you press the "I" key, and pick up switches if you hover over them and press "F". Thank 'ee

to Kingsley Hyam and David Bartle for that 'un.

DOUBLE DRAGON

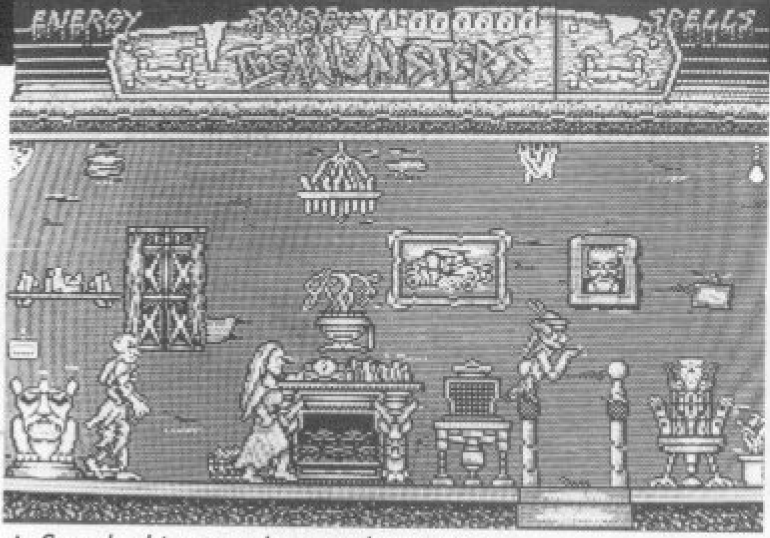
Razz 'n' Dazz of Wickford reckon you should play in two player mode and get both players killed until you have one credit left and the CONTINUE message is displayed on both sides of the screen. Press both fire buttons simultaneously and you should find yourself with infinite lives. Richard Smith of Leigh-on-Sea claims that if you type 'R U CALLING MY PINT A POFF!" on the title screen and press Return you'll be able to kill every opponent with just a prod of the DELETE key.

BATMAN

If you're really stumped on "The Penguin Plot" here are some tips from Harry the Hacker which should get you well into the game. Batarang the men with guns until they speed up and they will drop a useful bag of crisps (you can do a similar thing to the clowns in "A Fete Worse Than Death"). Use the spanner to fix the computer then insert the disk. Use the badge to get past the policeman and take the rope, then climb up the first ladder you come to collect the torch. Go down and use the key to open the factory door. Use the rope to get down the lift, then you should be able to walk right and pick up a key which lets you go back up.

Those of you who have problems with the Joker in "A Fete Worse Than Death" should be pleased with this complete solution from Barry Monger of Hayes in Middlesex.

From your start position in the park go left, down then right and lick up the metal bar. Keep going right and get the light bulb. From there, go left, up, left and up, and take the Batarang. Go down, left, down and left. Use the light bulb in the dark room and go to the door. Use the bar to break the door open, then drop the bar. Go left and get the torch, then go down the ladder. The next room is also dark so switch on your torch and watch out for rats. Now, head down, then left and up



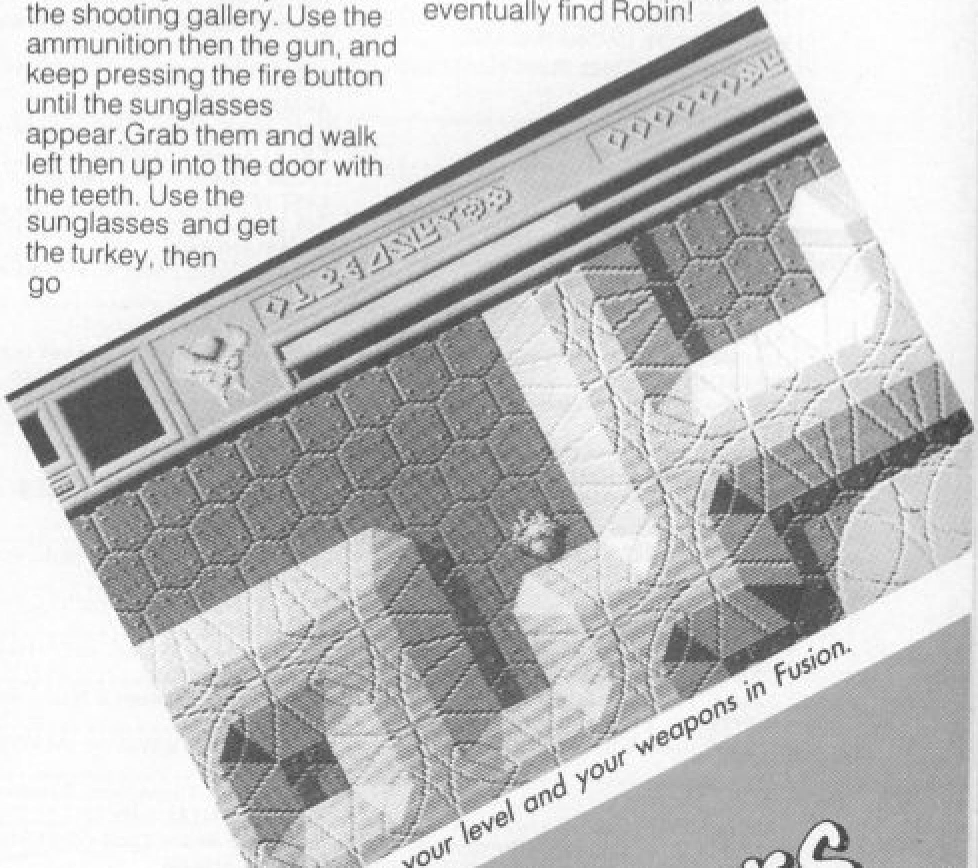
▲ *Spooky hints are here to haunt you.*

and pick up the carrot. Go down, right and up and collect the gas mask which you should use as soon as you enter the room to the right. Go down, left, down and down again. Go right until you reach another ladder going up. Go up it until you come across some teeth, which you should pick up and use. Go down, right, up, up, left, down, left up the ladder, down, left and pick up the fish. Go right, down and right again to find a bag of money, then go up, right, down, right, up, up the ladder. Get the ears, use them and then drop them. Go down the ladder, down right, up, right, up left, down, collect the pliers and you can now defuse bombs just by standing next to them and using the pliers.

To find the bombs you have to go all the way back, so go up, right, up, left down the ladder, defuse the bomb. Head right, then down, then left, down, left as far as you can go and defuse the next bomb. Then go up, left, down, left, up, up again, defuse the bomb, go left, and defuse the next bomb. Now, go left, then down and get the handcuffs. Go up, right, down the ladder, right, down, down, left, up, down, down, the ladder, left, and defuse the bomb. Walk left, climb up the lader, go up and defuse the bomb. Then it's right, up, left, down, left and defuse the bomb. Go up and defuse the bomb, then go down, right, up, right, down, left, down, down the ladder, right, up the ladder, right, up, up again, left, down the ladder, left, up the ladder, down, down, right, up, right, down, right as far as you can go, then up, right, up, left, up

the ladder, right, down, left, down, right, up, left, up, up again and take the camera (phew! Are you following all this?) Anyway, use the camera then drop it. Now go left, down, down, then keep going right until the words "The Fun Fair" appears in the top left of the screen. Now go right, up, up and left, then stand by the fruit machine and use the money. You should now find some ammunition on the floor, so pick it up and go right, down, down then continue right until you can go up. Take the gun, go down, right then up, take the coconut, then go down and continue right until you reach the shooting gallery. Use the ammunition then the gun, and keep pressing the fire button until the sunglasses appear.Grab them and walk left then up into the door with the teeth. Use the sunglasses and get the turkey, then go

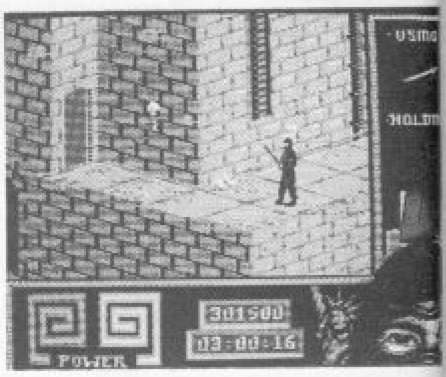
left, up the ladder and right, and you should see the Joker. Hit him repeatedly until he runs off, then go up twice and hit him again. Go left and left again and hit the Joker as befor. Now go right, down, left, down, left and take the elephant. Go down the ladder, right, up get the milk, down, left, down, left, up, left, down, take the object and drop it, go up, right, up, up the ladder, up, collect the knife, go down, left, down and left again until you see the Joker. If you hit him as before he will fall over, giving you the opportunity to slap the cuffs on him. Once bound, he should drop a large card which you should pick up and take right, up and left, to a room with a similar card in it. Use your card and you should then be able to walk through the large card as if it were a door. Go left, collect the can, go down. Go down and you should find yourself at the Roller Coaster. Go right climb the ladder and go right until you come to another ladder, which you should also climb. Go left (remembering to duck when the eagles fly past), keep going and you should eventually find Robin!

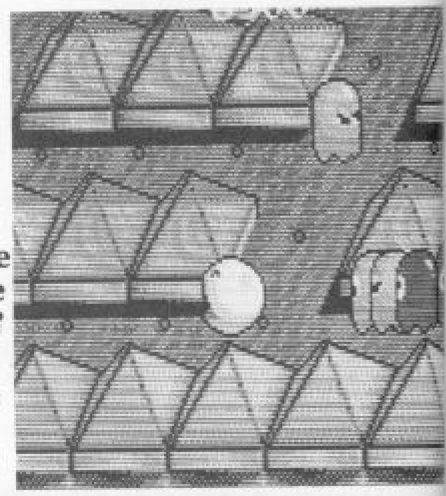


▲ *Choose your level and your weapons in Fusion.*

PlayMasters

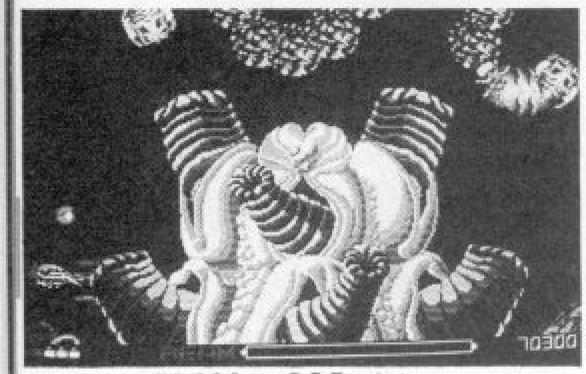
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▲ Beat 575,900 on PC Engine R-Type.

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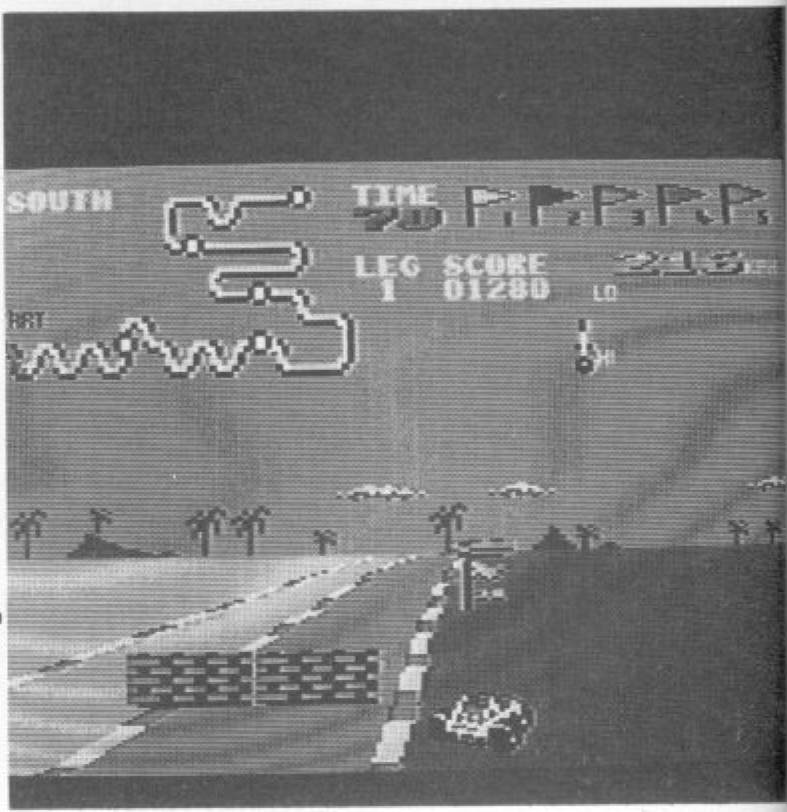
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JOYSTICK AWARDS 88

It's that Golden Joystick time of year again. Voting is now open for Europe's most prestigious computer game awards. Golden Joysticks is entering its sixth proud year. In the time we have been running the awards each year has seen a large growth in the number of votes cast by you – the C+VG readers. It's the reader poll that makes our awards the special ones. No arbitrary panels, no reviewers sticking their noses in. The games that win our prizes are the ones you vote for. Plain and simple.

This year we are expanding the awards by inviting our sister magazines in the Emap group (our publishers) to extend the voting to their readers. Voting forms will also be appearing in Sinclair User, Commodore User and The One.

The game categories are as follows: Software House of the Year, Game of the Year, Adventure of the Year, Arcade Game of the Year, Strategy Game of the Year, Role Playing Game of the Year, Programmer of the Year, Best Original Game, Best Coin-op Conversion, Best Graphics (16 bit), Best Graphics (8 bit), Best Soundtrack (16 bit), Best Soundtrack (8 bit), Best Simulation.

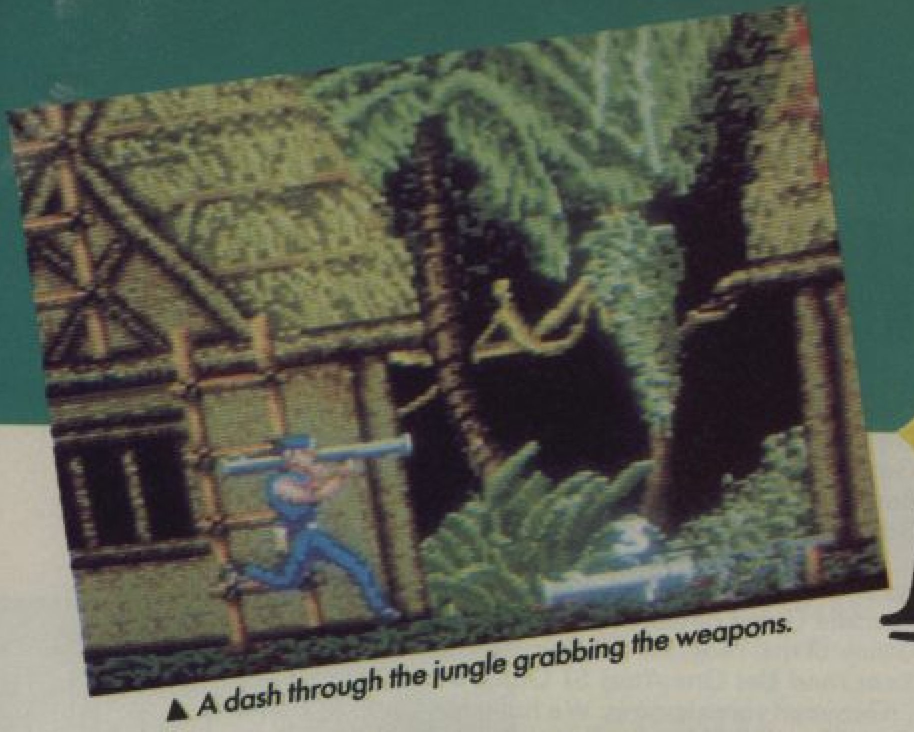
In addition there are four machine specific awards sponsored by individual magaiznes. These are the C+VG Console Game of the Year, the Commodore User Amiga Game of the Year, the Sinclair User Spectrum Game of the Year, and The One Atari ST Game of the Year.

Get your votes in now. We have ten C+VG 'Stonking Good Read' T Shirts to give away to ten lucky voters who are drawn out of our mail bag. Vote now.

Best Coin-op Conversion........ R-TYPE / BUGGY BOY
Runner-Up........ Dble Dragon / Bionic commandos
Software House of the Year........ Ocean / Rainbird
Runner-Up........ FTL / FTL
Arcade Game of the Year........ Dble dragon II / Zybots
Runner-Up........ Zybots / Chase HQ
Best Adventure Game........ Larry / Larry
Runner-Up........ Kings quest II / Space quest
Best Original Game........ populus / populous
Runner-Up........ Dungeon master / Zybots
Best Graphics (8-bit)........ Target Renegade / Non existent
Runner-Up........
Best Graphics (16-bit)........ Defender crown / Defender of crown
Runner-Up........ Opwolf / Hostages
Best Soundtrack (8-bit)........
Runner-Up........
Best Soundtrack (16-bit)........ Baal / Purple saturn
Runner-Up........ Thrust / predator
Programmer of the Year........ me / me
Runner-Up........ me / me
Best Role Playing Game........ Dunge on master / same
Runner-Up........ Ad dungeons & dragons / Bards tale
Strategy Game of the Year........ Wargame construction Kit / same
Runner-Up........ UMS / UMS
Best Simulation........ Falcon / Carrier comand
Runner-Up........ C.cmd / Falcon
Game of the Year........ Dgn Mst / Same
Runner-Up........ Spy v Spy / C.cmd
Best Console Game........
Runner-Up........

Send your forms to: Golden Joysticks 1988, C+VG, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3AU.

Voting Coupon



▲ A dash through the jungle grabbing the weapons.

ARCADE

MISSING IN ACTION

Konami must be very short of new ideas if they think they can fob us off with Missing In Action — a game which would have been new and innovative several years ago.

For Missing In Action is horribly reminiscent of Green Beret and a very bad Green Beret at that. The graphics are very stylish, large, colourful and well drawn. But the movement! Just watching the game gave me a case of the shudders. It's jerky and totally without realism. In fact, the characters all seem to have trouble running, I think it's because of the high knee action and the fact they appear to be running a lot faster than they actually are.

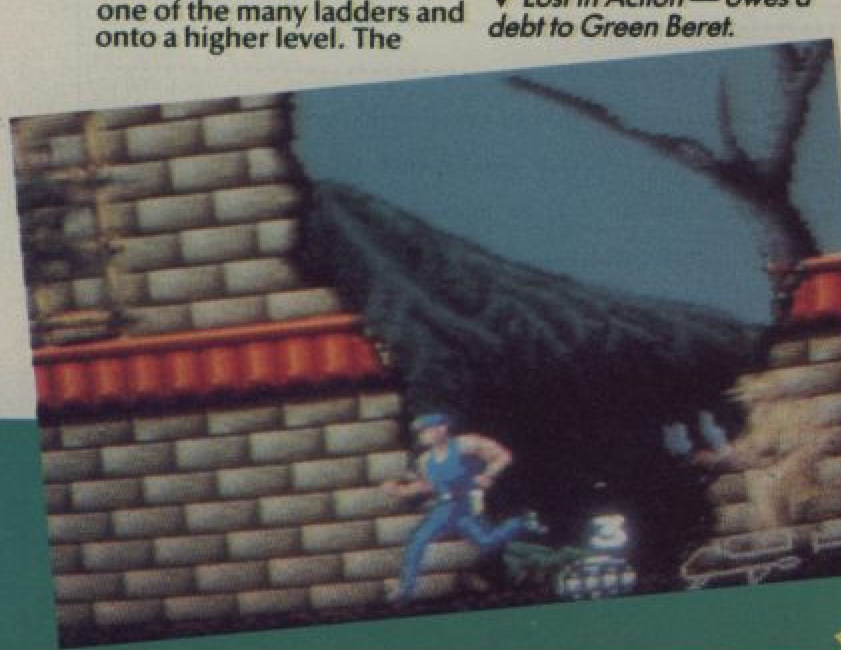
That grouse aside, the game is much the same as the original. You are given an important mission which means moving behind enemy lines and you're immediately spotted. The enemy rush in from all sides and you've only got your two fists to rely on, that is, until you can pick up a weapon.

Half the time your best form of escape is to run up one of the many ladders and onto a higher level. The enemy is always hot on your heels but this gives you a little breathing room. The airfield scene is particularly fraught. As well as dodging your pursuers you'll have to find your way round the huge transport planes which roll towards you with their propellors sweeping your getaway route. The only way out is up the ladder to the cockpit, along the spine of the plane and down the other side. Tricky when under pressure.

Jungle scenes follow and you'll eventually play back the way you came to the airfield scene again — the first time I've seen a horizontally scrolling game play from left to right. On the strategy side, all you have to do is make sure you keep one step ahead of the enemy — hit before you're hit, and if you're out of range, drop to the ground to avoid the bullets and grenades whizzing your way.

Missing In Action is a another attempt at a well worn theme. The graphics save it somewhat but there are more innovative games out there.

▼ *Lost In Action — owes a debt to Green Beret.*





▲ *Impressive congratulatory screen at end of level two.*

E ACTION



▲ *Image Fight — lightning fast vertical shoot 'em up.*

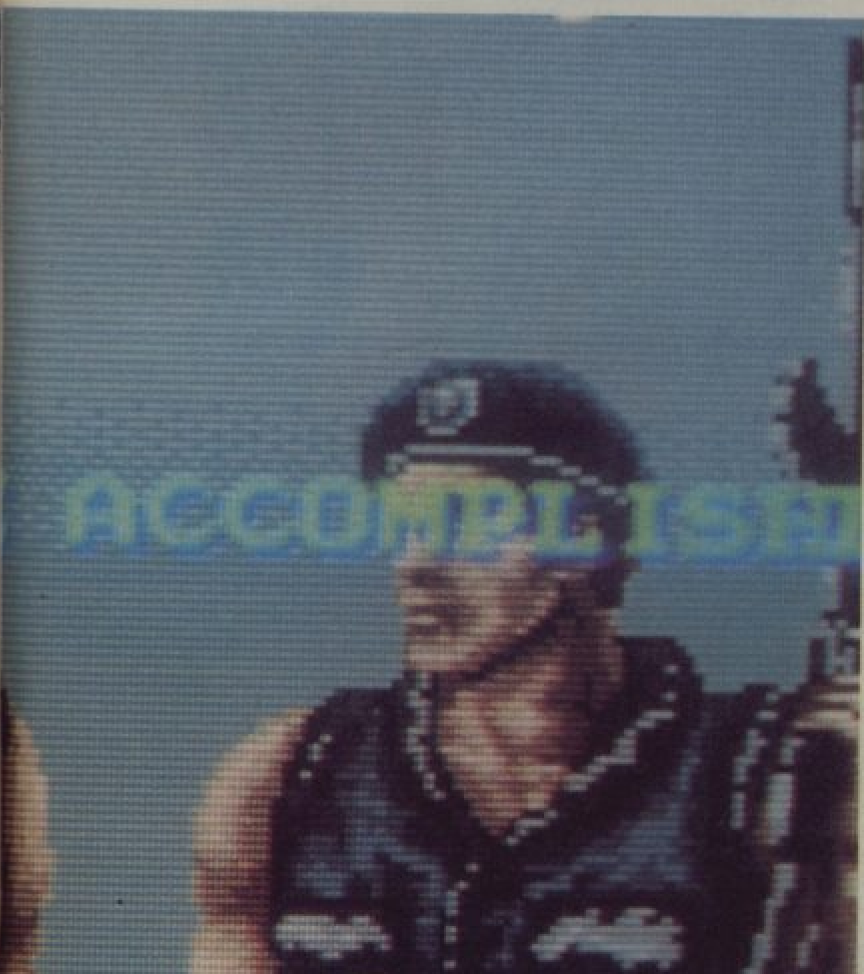
IMAGE FIGHT

Irem's *Image Fight* has that certain something which makes it instantly more playable.

Once again you're poised to take on the first wave of attacking enemy, and they swoop down with a vengeance spraying you with clouds of deadly fire balls.

As soon as you destroy the first attack wave you can go for the pods. Little satellite ships which attach themselves to your wingtips and duplicate your fire. Red pods are more erratic; they fire in the opposite direction to your joystick movements and in 16 directions. Blue pods are more stable and fire straight ahead. Up to three pods can be attached and they make a hell of a difference of your fire power.

The graphics are very typical of Irem, and very close to the chunky colourful style found in *Mr Heli*. The game itself moves fluidly and there's enough coming at you to offer quite a challenge. While there's nothing new here you'll find *Image Fight* extremely addictive.



ASUKA 'N' ASUKA

My heart sank as I attempted to play *Asuka 'n' Asuka* from Taito. It's not that the game's particularly difficult, it's just that it's similar to every other vertically scrolling shoot 'em up ever released.

You control a craft which starts off at the bottom of the screen and must shoot the squadrons of alien craft.

Equipped with rapid fire and a smart bomb effect, annihilate each attacking wave to produce a pick-up symbol which increases the strength of your weapons.

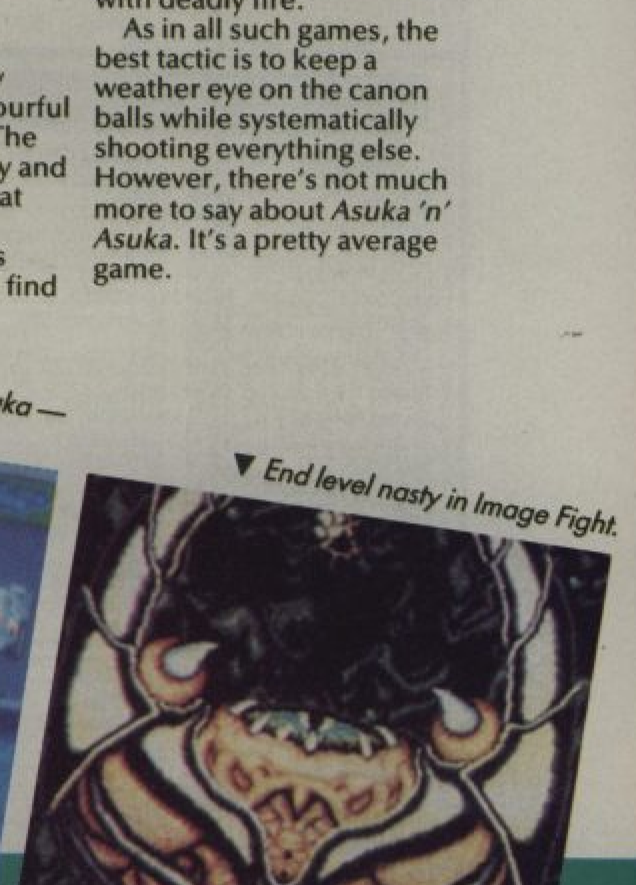
Some of the aliens are pretty hard to deal with, especially those which whirl down like vicious catherin wheels spraying the area with deadly fire.

As in all such games, the best tactic is to keep a weather eye on the canon balls while systematically shooting everything else. However, there's not much more to say about *Asuka 'n' Asuka*. It's a pretty average game.

▼ *Asuka 'n' Asuka — average stuff.*



▼ *End level nasty in Image Fight.*



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ARCADE



▲ A nonchalant pose.

STRIDER

Strider from Capcom is a game which defies the laws of gravity. It'll have you climbing up the walls.

As the name suggests your character strides manfully over the rooftops of some foreign city. Walking presents no problem, it's just the method which is a bit strange. Walking down a domed roof, your character leans at an angle just short of 45 degrees and still manages not to fall over!

Attackers and alien objects hurl themselves at you from all directions, though these are quickly despatched with the aid of a flashing boomerang of light. Knock our some flying aliens to pick up an object which follows you around like some little robotic dog. The thing runs around you shooting your attackers — rather like a satellite ship in shoot 'em ups.

So over the roof tops you harge, cartwheeling over seemingly impassable gaps and charging on through catwalks to the next section of the city. Climbing walls is a cinch as you shin up vertical stone, stopping only long enough to knock out razor sharp revolving knives which lie in your path.

The graphics are large, movement is fast and the whole game comes over as being something a bit different. However, there are one or two borrowed themes, the main one being your traditional end of level monster.

As you belt into the council room at the end of the level, the councillors rise and line up one after the other to form a huge thrashing monster complete with massive pincers at the front end and whipping tail at the other. The only way to defeat the thing as it writhes round the screen is to stand in the centre of the floor and keep firing. Eventually it'll form a circle and when its tail meets it head you can destroy it. Move out of the centre and you're a dead man.

Further levels will see more of the same with a bewildering variety of backgrounds, monstrous tigers and other creatures. Strider is fast, it demands a fair degree of skill of play and offers quite a challenge.

▼ Plenty of robot-biffing frolics.





▲ Strider defies gravity.

EACTION





▲ *The contestants line up.*

FINAL BLOW

After the excitement of the Bruno v Tyson fight, what better time to bring out a boxing simulation.

Now you can step into the ring, experience the euphoria of being the winner and not have a bruise to show for it in Taito's Final Blow.

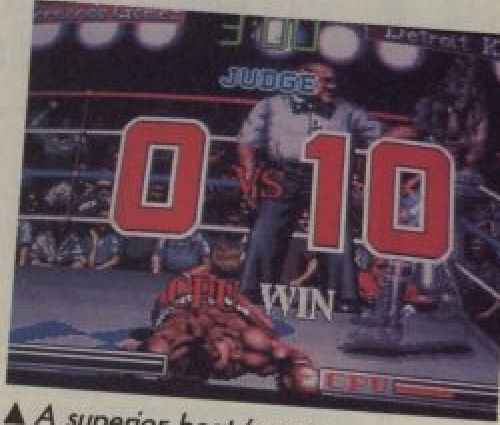
This time there's been no attempt at the 3D approach, instead Taito have gone for good, solid graphics, and some realistic gameplay. There are a large variety of punches and these and the strength of each hit are controlled by the joystick position and pressing a combination of three fire buttons.

I found the game very confusing at first, but as soon as you get the hang of the controls you'll be throwing good solid punches, punishing hooks and short, sharp jabs.

Select one of five opponents from the ringside from Dynamite Joe to the Detroit Kid. You'll need different tactics for each fight. And to make the game more of a challenge each opponent has a different height, weight and arm reach.

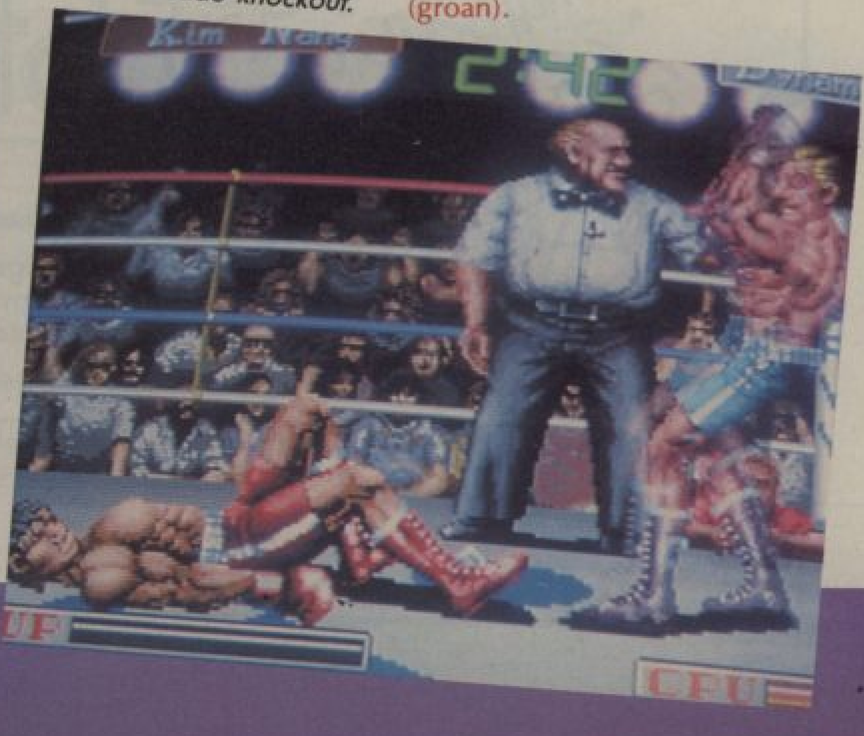
Winning four bouts makes you overall champion, and you can only win each bout by a Knock Out or judge's decision.

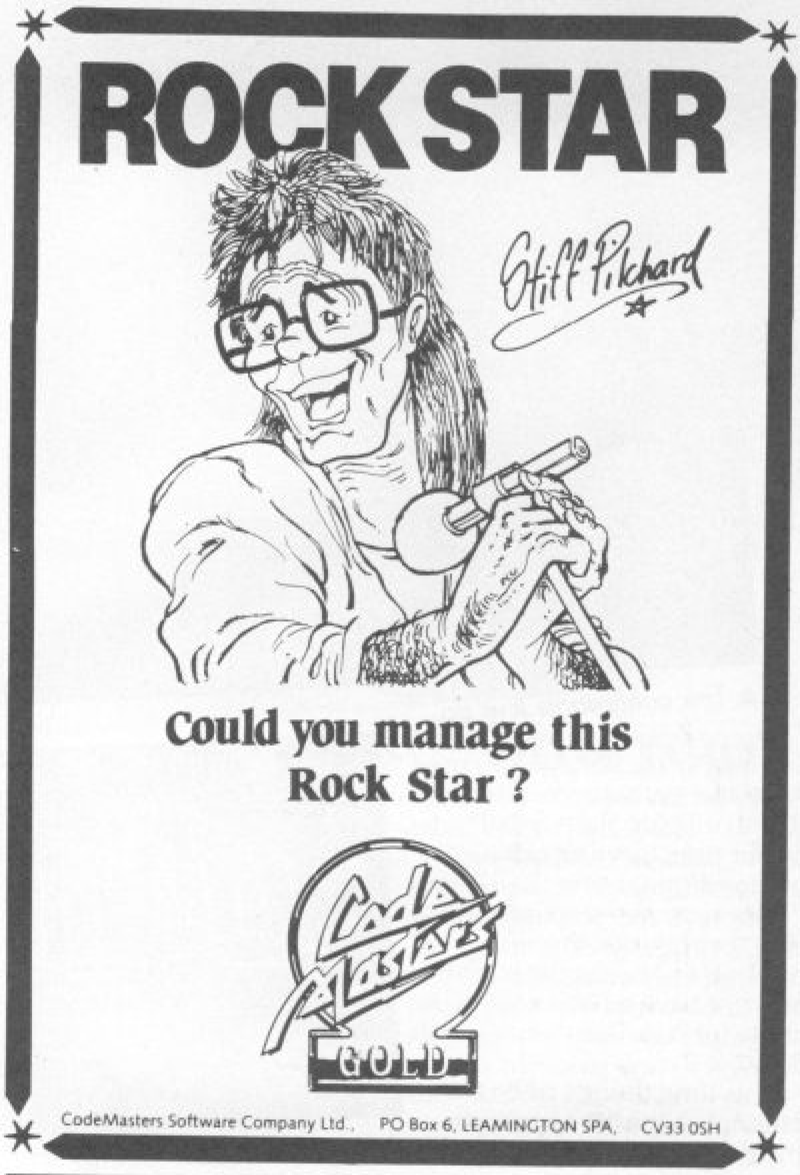
Final Blow is hard work, but the challenge is worth it to become champ. Move over Mike Tyson, Eugene the Ed's lacing up his gloves (groan).

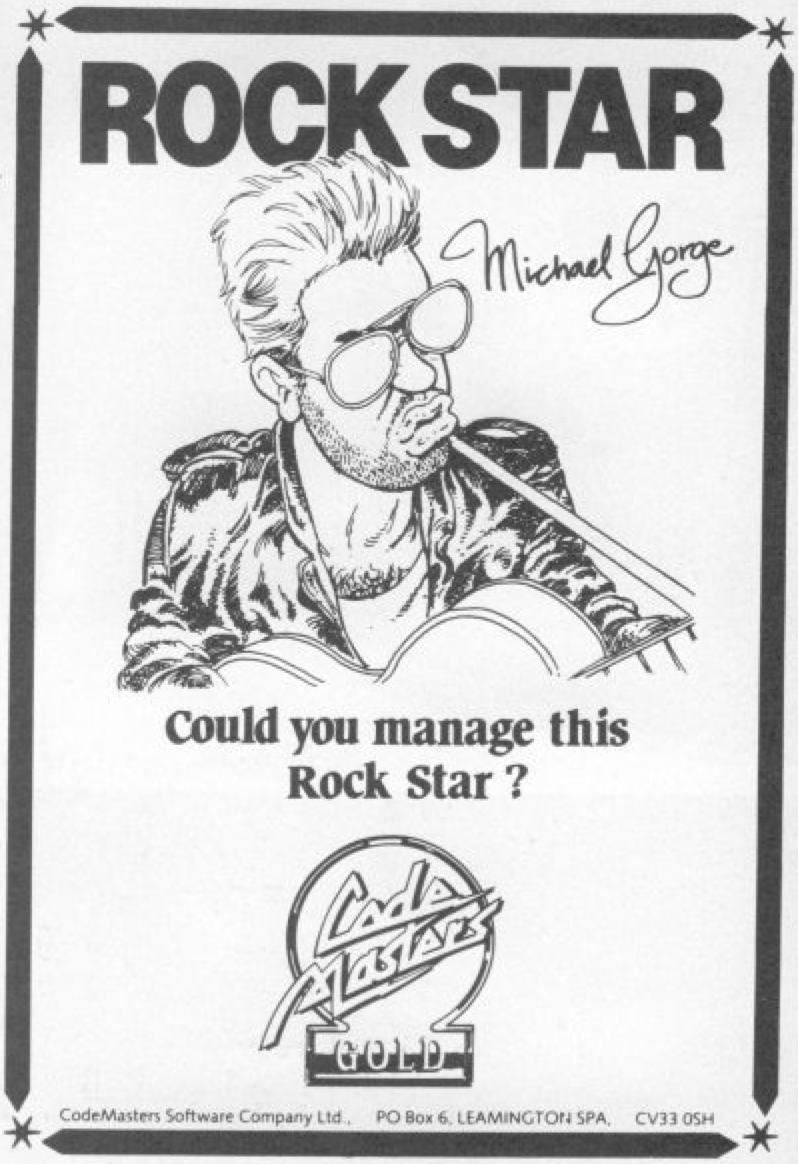


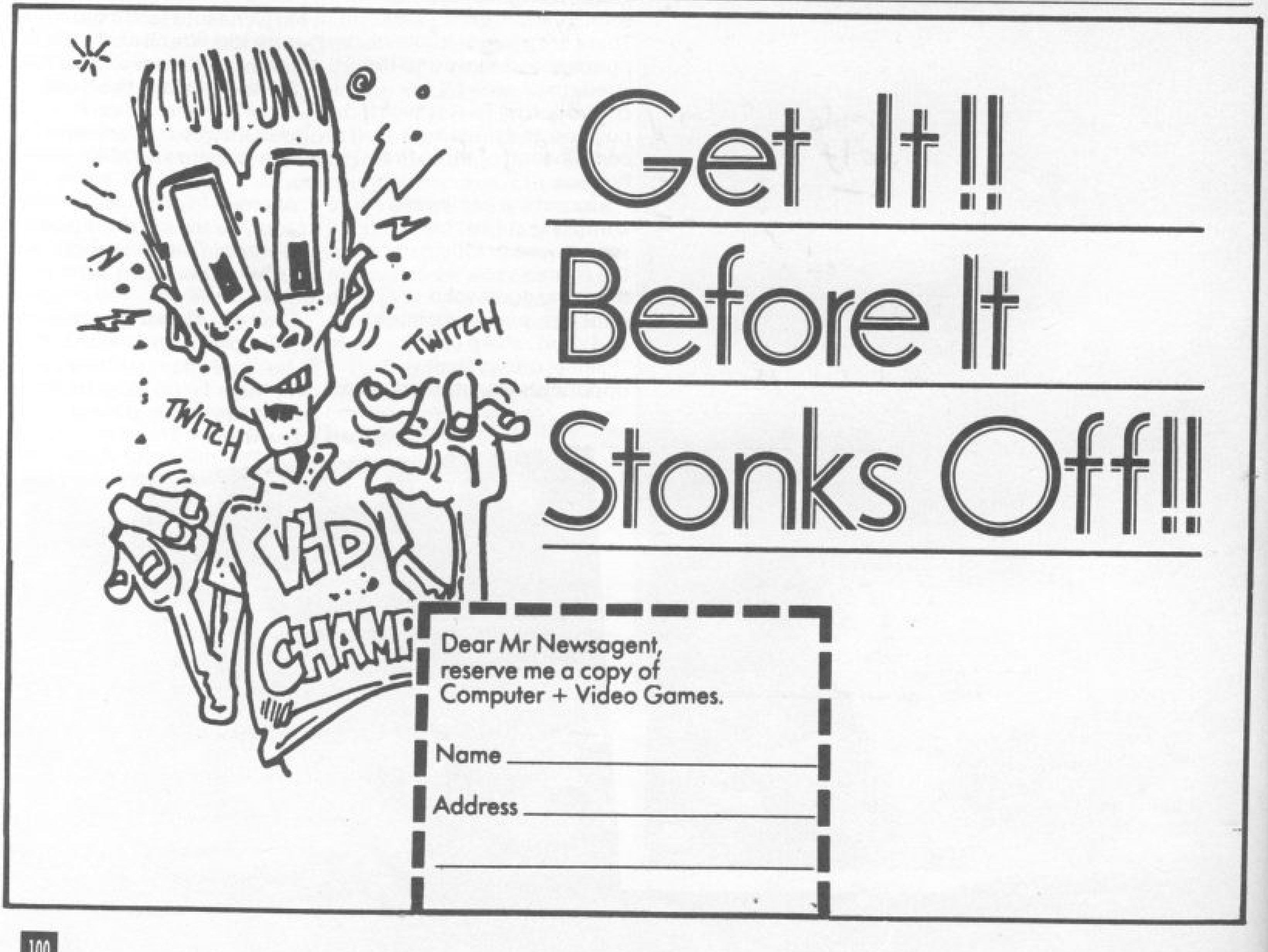
▲ *A superior beat 'em up.*

▼ *An arcade knockout.*




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Mean Machines is meaner than ever this month. Everything is a red hot exclusive — including the first in depth look at CPC Engine CD software, reviews of Space Harrier and Vigilante, Gradius for Nintendo and Cyborg Hunter on the Sega. Plus all the latest console news. Start here for consoles.

CYBORG HUNTER

SEGA, £22.95

Cyborg Hunter from Activisionis an arcade adventure in the mould of Zilion, and while it doesn't score high marks for originality, makes up for it with plenty of fighting and shooting action.

The Cyborg Hunter in question is a tough 'n' ruthless mercenary who's more than a little cheesed off with the antics of Vipron and his vast army of homicidal robots. They've been whooping it up and terrorising the neighbourhood, and Cyborg Hunter has decided enough is enough, and is going to stonk right into Vipron's fortress and teach him a lesson he'll never forget...

As you can imagine, chez Vipron is a big, dark and foreboding place, and is packed with Vipron's horde of metal maniacs. They lurk in halls, outside lifts, and around just about every corner of Vipron's horizontally scrolling abode. So Cyborg Hunter is in for a bit of tough time.

Being a mercenary type, CH is a hard dude, and can give as good as he gets, and any renegade robot who bars his way can be destroyed with a few well-aimed kicks and punches. Mind you, while CH is kicking seven shades out of the robot, the binary baddie tries to get in a few thumps of his own in an attempt to wear down the hero's energy bar.

Vipron's castle has different levels, which are accessed by entering the lift and travelling to another floor. The higher the floor, the tougher the robots — so it's best to stick around on lower floors until you're adept at fighting.

The objective is to reach Vipor himself, and give him a darn good thumping. And with you in control, Cyborg Hunter's not going to fail, is he?

As I've already said, Cyborg Hunter isn't the most original game around, but it is addictive and challenging, with a large map to explore and plenty of robots to reduce to scrap metal. Zillion fans should certainly be in their element here, although those who find this type of game tedious should steer clear.

JULIAN RIGNALL



▲ *Cyborg Hunter — arcade adventure for Sega.*

SEGA

▶ GRAPHICS	79%
▶ SOUND	68%
▶ VALUE	67%
▶ PLAYABILITY	78%
▶ **OVERALL**	**76%**

MACH RIDER

NINTENDO, £29.95

Set in 2112 AD, *Mach Rider* casts the player as defender of justice and truth, destined to ride the freeways of the far-flung future and rid them of the evil invading forces. Yes, old mother Earth is in peril once again, and it's up to you to save the day.

Basically, *Mach Rider* is a *Road Blasters* variant, with the player whizzing down the road on a turbo motorbike blasting anything and everything. The proceedings are viewed in typical race game style — in 3D from behind the bike.

At the start of a game there are four options: fighting, solo, endurance and design. The fighting option pits you against the alien forces. Five lives are given, and you have to race down the road avoiding obstacles and destroying everything that gets in the way using the bike's cannons, or by bumping them off the road. Survive long enough to get to the end of the road and a bonus is awarded before the player progresses to the next, more difficult track.

If the endurance option is chosen, you have to travel a certain distance within a time limit. Unlimited lives are given — you just have to travel far enough to be able to go the the next stage, which requires an even greater range to be covered. This is far easier than the fighting mode, and allows you to rack up more points by being reckless and blasting everything that moves.

Solo is similar to endurance, but the road is far more twisting, and there aren't any other vehicles on the track — speed is of the essence here, as further distance needs to be covered.

Finally, design lets you build your own tracks and race on them.

Having seen *Mach Rider* screen shots I was looking forward to playing this, but unfortunately I found myself coming away disappointed.

The 3D effect is fast, but the road moves quite jerkily and the motorbike controls don't feel particularly good. The graphics are quite garish too, although the sprites are solid-looking.

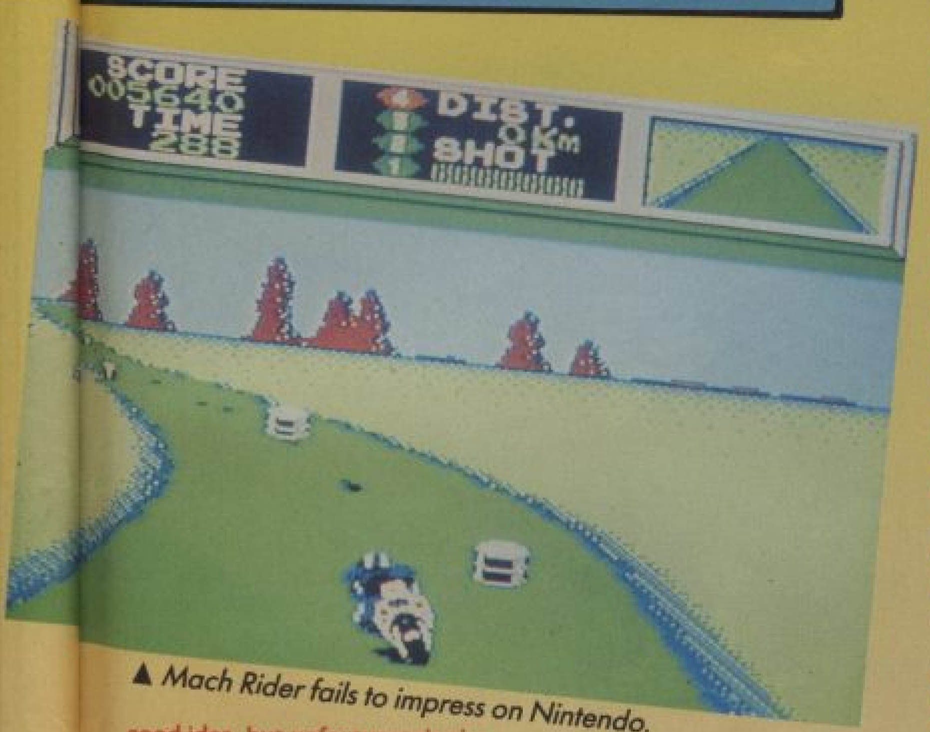
The three modes of play is a



▼ *Your bike is armed.*



EAW HINES



▲ *Mach Rider fails to impress on Nintendo.*

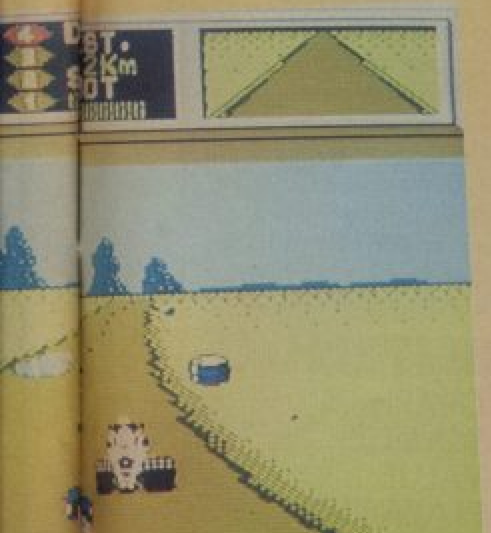
good idea, but unfortunately the endurance and solo options are let down by being too easy, allowing a novice to get far into the game with little practice. Fighting, on the other hand, is very tough, almost to the point of being offputting. The difficulty levels just haven't been balanced very well.

Having said that, Mach Rider isn't totally dire — it just isn't good enough to justify the massive £30 price tag. The gameplay is fun for a while, but doesn't hold your attention long enough.

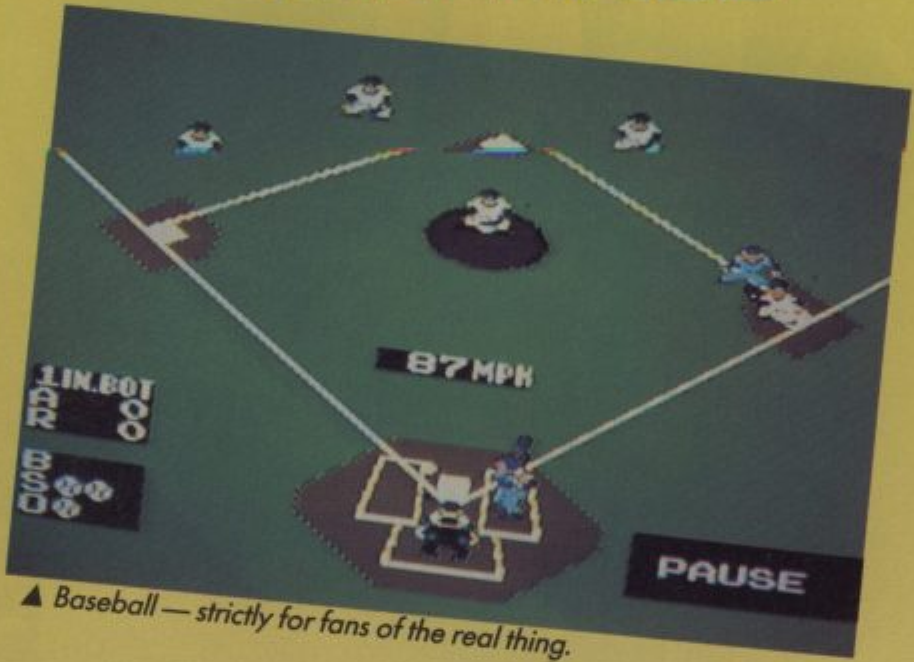
JULIAN RIGNALL

NINTENDO

▶ GRAPHICS	61%
▶ SOUND	42%
▶ VALUE	33%
▶ PLAYABILITY	59%
▶ **OVERALL**	**58%**



BASEBALL



▲ *Baseball — strictly for fans of the real thing.*

NINTENDO, £24.99

Although there are several types of Baseball games available in american, including the superb *RGI Baseball*, only Nintendo's own version is available here in the UK at present.

The presentation is ver straightforward, with twomodes of play; either a human against a computer team, or two players battling head to head. There are six different teams to choose from, each one having its own strengths and weaknesses.

Two screens are used during the game, one which shows a close-up of the batter and ptícher, and another showing the entire playing field, which pops up when the ball is hit outside the diamond.

Traditional Baseball rules are strictly adhered to, and control has been deliberately simplified so that even a Baseball novice can easily get straight into the action.

I enjoy Baseball games, and looked forward to giving this a few innings. However disappointment was the order of the day. Nintendo's Baseball fails due to the speed of the gameplay — everything is very slow. Players waddle around as if they're walking through treacle, and when you throw the ball it flies along at very low velocity. Even pitching is slow!!

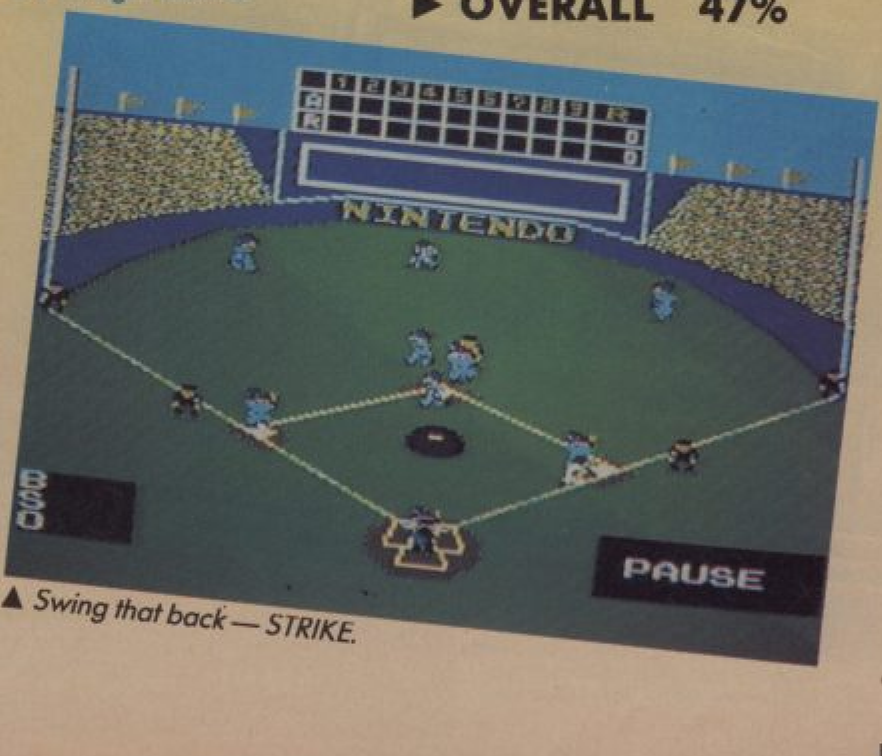
The graphics are also very weak, with blocky and badly defined players, and a very lurid pitch. The animation isn't very good eithr, nd the whole game looks unconvincing.

Ardent Baseball fans will doubtless glean some enjoyment out of this, but I'd personally wait for a better version of the sport to be released before rushing out with my dosh.

JULIAN RIGNALL

NINTENDO

▶ GRAPHICS	40%
▶ SOUND	38%
▶ VALUE	40%
▶ PLAYABILITY	52%
▶ **OVERALL**	**47%**



▲ *Swing that back — STRIKE.*

MEAN MACHINES

C+VG HIT!

GRADIUS

NINTENDO, £24.95

Konami's Gradius, or Nemesis as it's better known in the UK, appeared in 1985 and is notable for being the first arcade game with power-up weaponry. The Nintendo translation has all the features of the original machine, and is far superior to the computer versions that were released by Konami a few years ago.

The objective of this horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up is to conquer the evil Bacterion empire that's threatening the galaxy. It's just you and your trusty Warp Rattler space craft against seven levels of hostile and heavily armed alien forces.

The mission starts on a volcanic planet, and the Rattler flies in and blasts at the fleets of Bacterion crafts that form the primary attack force of the empire. When an attack wave of craft is destroyed, an icon is left behind which is picked up to advance the power-up weapons bar at the bottom of the screen. There are six features in all — speed-up, missile, double-fire, laser, option and force field, and any can be chosen if enough icons have been collected. All the weapons are self explanatory, but if you're wondering, the option is a ball which floats behind the Rattler and emulates all its moves and firepower — up to two can be collected with pretty devastating results.



The ony hiding place on level one.



'Blue Nose' power-up — for maximum protection.

As with most shoot 'em ups of this type, the end of each level is guarded by a giant mothership which is destroyed to go onto the next stage. The levels are varied, and range from volcanic planets (complete with boulder-spitting mountains) through a stage-packed with rocks upon which sit Easter Island statues that spit glowing rings at the Rattler to the inside of the Bacterion fortress, which is bristling with gun emplacements and robot defence networks.

Gradius is a thumping good arcade conversion, and combines good looks and brilliant top-notch shoot 'em up. The gameplay is very challenging and addictive, and kept me coming back to the Nintendo time and time again to see whether I could get just a little bit further.

The graphics are superb, and fully recreate the look of the original machine, and apart from the very occasional flicker, everything moves smoothly — even when the Rattler has a full compliment of weapons. Sound is also faithful to the coin-op, with good background music and effects.

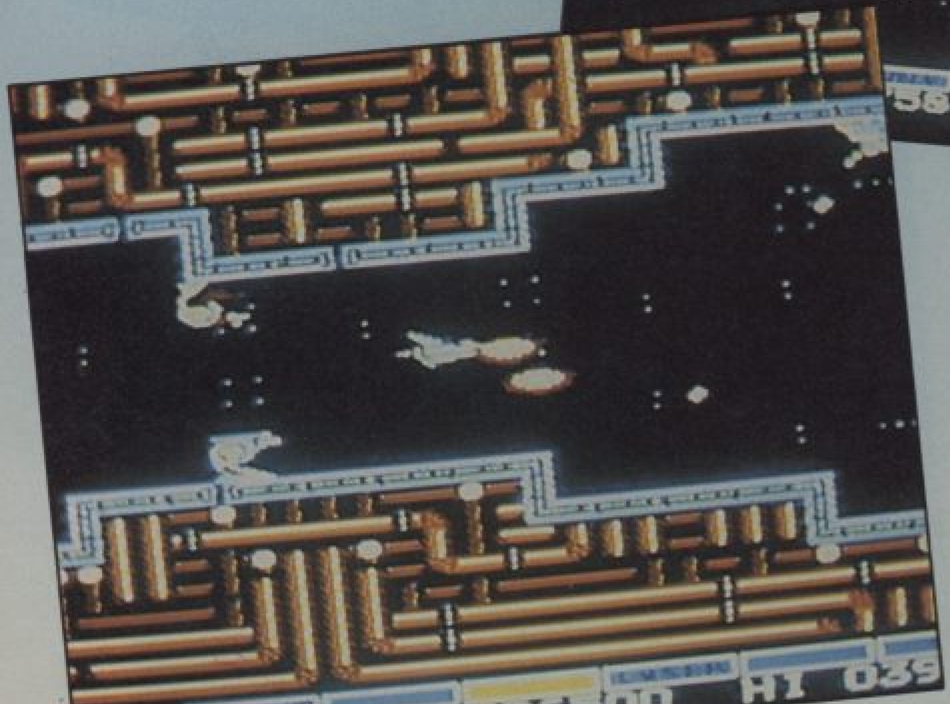
As well as packing in all the features of the coin-op, Konami have added plenty of their own in the form of cheats and hidden bonuses. On each level it's possible to get an extra man and 5000 bonus points by completing a set manoeuvre, and there are also a myriad of other secret bonuses and warps which I'll be revealing in Playmasters in the coming months.

Nintendo blasters are rare beasts, so don't let this one escape.

JULIAN RIGNALL

NINTENDO

▶ GRAPHICS	98%
▶ SOUND	78%
▶ VALUE	72%
▶ PLAYABILITY	92%
▶ **OVERALL**	**87%**



Nearing the end and Rignall still has two-power ups.

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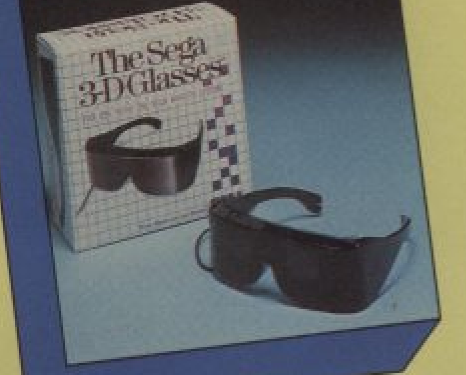
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RAMPAGE

You and your buddy are ready for a little action tonight 'cause you just happen to be in the mood to tear up the town. You'll demolish buildings, grab and chomp horrified spectactors and other yummy morsels, and flatten puny helicopters and other antagonists who try to stop you!

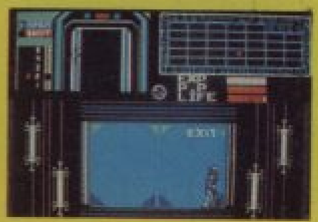
Addictive gameplay, marvellous graphics combined with originality and a great sense of humour! C+VG, March 1989



'R' TYPE

They came from a Dimensional plane clear across the galaxy, wreaking havoc and chaos from star system to star system. With an evil that smothers all resistance with fear and terror, the horrid creatures of the Bydo Empire are now knocking on, Earth's front door.

Is by far the best blast available on the Sega, so it goes without saying that no shoot 'em up fan should be without it! C+VG, March 1989



CYBORG HUNTER

The year, 2242 you are Paladin, the toughest bounty hunter in the galaxy. Monstrous Cybags are threatening to take control of the Universe under the direction of their evil leader, Vipron. Your mission is to gain access to Vipron's chambers and destroy him. Sound easy enough? It isn't!

Horizontally scrolling arcade adventure, action packed! C+VG, March 1989



Y's

You are Aron Christian, a swordsman washed ashore by the might and fury of a hurricane. You were found half dead by a kind and humble fisherman and he restored you to health. The fishing village sat at the edge of the great plain. Rising in the distance was a small mountain range with an ominous tower at its peak. 'That is the Tower of the Doomed', the fisherman told you as they made the sign of the evil eye. 'It is the place where the troubles of our land began'. As you watched the tower, you knew that your destiny waited there.

The whole thing looks incredible – the best I've seen on the Sega. Y's offers depth and playability and will keep you engrossed for weeks. It's a must! C+VG, March 1989

The PC Engine has been an unceasing subject of amazement for the last year, with a string of incredible games and arcade conversions to its name. But, in the words of Al Jolson, you ain't seen nothing yet (baby). The sound of jaws dropping was heard for miles around when the PC Engine CD-ROM player was brought into the C+VG offices. What is this wonder-widget? Julian Rignall has the story . . .

ME
MACH



▲ *See — it is* small.

CD~ROM ANTICS

▼ *The Rom Unit and games*



The pint-sized CD-ROM player is no bigger than a Sony Discman, yet has more memory than 1096 Amigas of 11416 Spectrums put together — a massive 548 megabytes!

Games come on conventional CD's, and are loaded in the same fashion as a computer disk — but these CD's are also capable of storing hi-fi sound which can be played while the game is running. The unit has outputs for headphones and a hi-fi link, so you can listen to your games in glorious stereo — and with the two games we've seen, the effect is nothing short of stunning.

Since the CD discs store so much information, there's plenty of disc accessingduring the game, but the scanning system is very rapid, and pauses are kept to a minimum.

Now to the games themselves. The two we've played are a conversion of Capcom's *Street Fighter* coin-op, and a very unusual Japanese role-playing-style game that translates something like *Hitsuku Mano* (apologies to Japanese readers — we could be wrong!).

Like all PC Engine conversions, *Street Fighter* looks and plays identically to the coin-op — but there's loads of extra speech and some incredible tunes that aren't featured in the original machine. The sound effects are brilliant, with digitised yells and thumps, and five amazing soundtracks for

EAW
HINES



▲ *Street Fighting in China.*

each part of the world where you fight. *Street Fighter* is noisy, tough and addictive — but apart from the superlative graphics and sound, doesn't otherwise offer anything that hasn't already been seen in a beat 'em up.

The other title is far more interesting, and really shows what can be done on CD. It's a strange type of role-playing game and has more speech and music than any other computer game we've seen! The story unfolds in a long series of animated cameo screens, each accompanied by dialogue and pieces of music — and I mean real music, with vocals, drums guitars and all!!

At regular intervals you have to partake in a Japanese trivia-style quiz. Hosting this



▲ *Go for it.*

section is a very surly questionmaster — but you have support in the form of a tiny cherubic female; both talk while you answer the questions, and berate you if you answer incorrectly. And if you answer three questions incorrectly you're thrown out of the game — get one right and you continue (after being congratulated by the cherub, who leaps up and down with excitement).

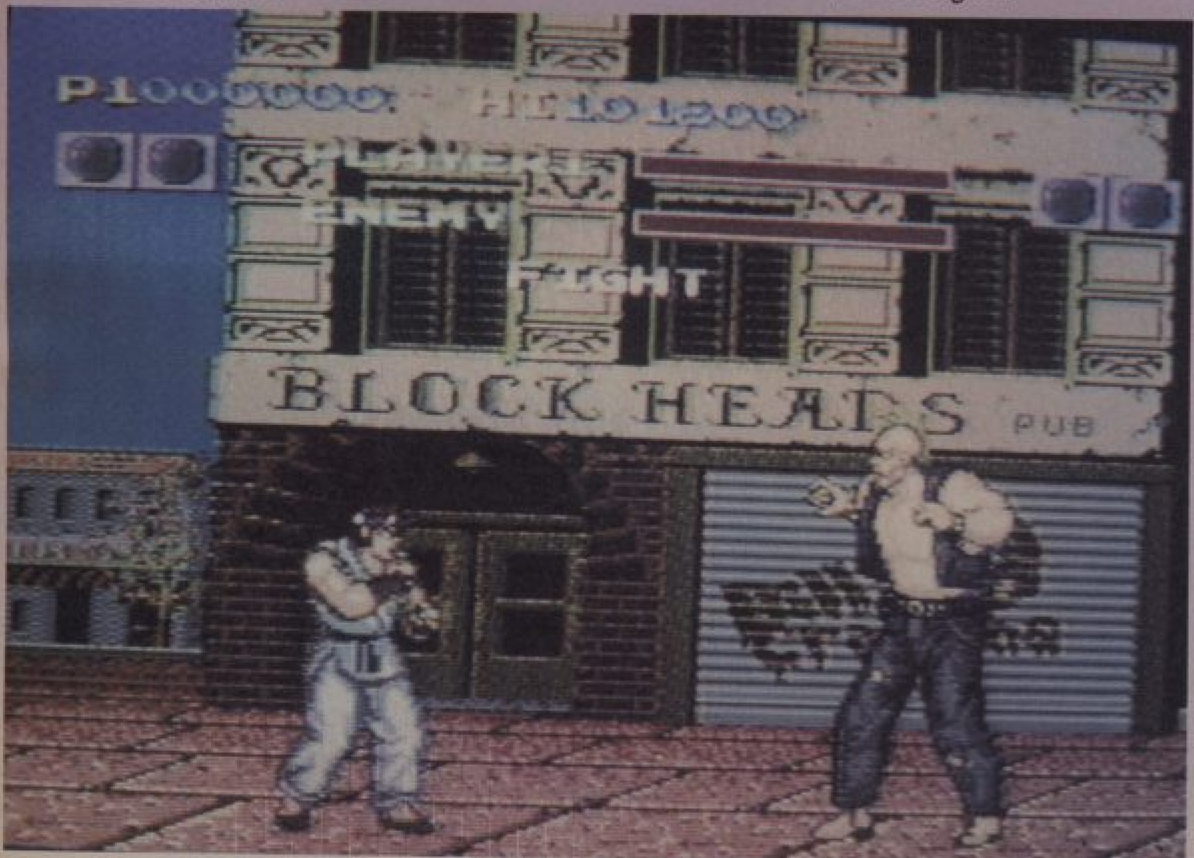
The graphics are great; very unusual oriental characters are to the fore, and some of the backdrops are outstanding. The game is absolutely huge — it's a shame it's all in Japanese. Hopefully, with the PC Engine being released in America, we'll see English translations.

We hope so — the PC Engine CD-ROM is definitely THE most exciting development in the game market since the advent of 16-bit.

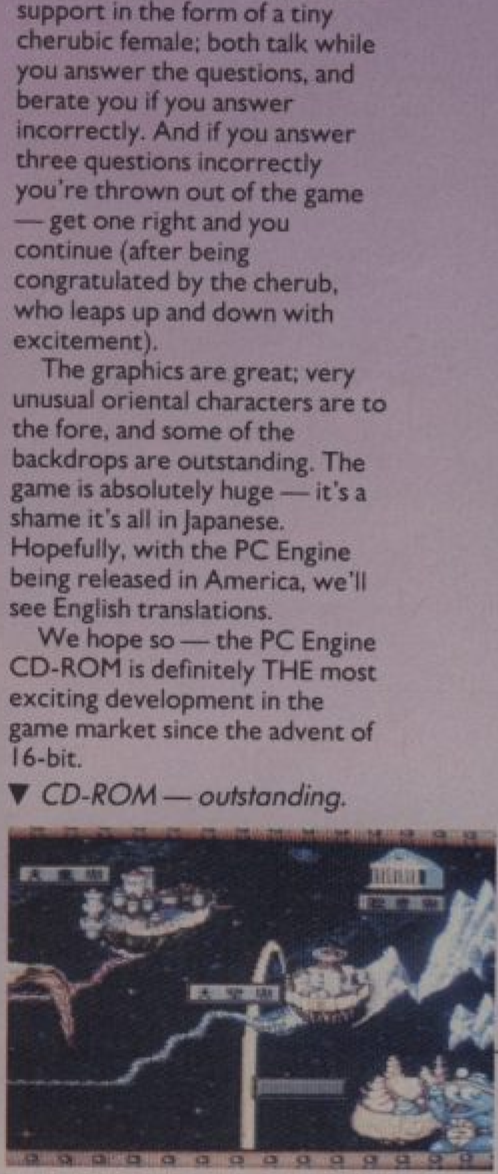


▲ *One of the Cameos.*

▼ *Street Fighter*



▼ *CD-ROM — outstanding.*





SPACE HARRIER

▶ PC Engine, Mail Order only.

Sega's *Space Harrier* caused a sensation when it was released in the arcades a few years ago, and looks set to make a similar impression on PC Engine owners now that it has been converted to this mega-machine

Unlike the computer conversions that were released by Elite, PC Engine Space Harrier features all 23 levels that were present in the coin-op original — quite a feat of programing! And it looks and sounds very similar too!

Storywise, there's not a lot to say about *Space Harrier* — it's just a case of flying over the landscape blasting everything stupid enough to get in your way, and avoiding the enemy craft and any missiles they fire in your general direction.

The enemy are a pretty wild 'n' weird mob, and range from futuristic aeroplanes to robots, mammoths, gremlins and bouncing mushrooms! At the end of each level is a giant monster, which you have to destroy. On level one there's a dragon, level two has a load of spinning heads — later ones include androids, a two-headed dragon, pods and opening and closing geodesics.

One of the most impressive features of PC Engine Space Harrier is the graphics; the 3D is fast, smooth and convincing, and the backdrops and sprites are colourful and detailed. The game doesn't just look pretty — it also plays brilliantly too. I wouldn't be lying if I said the gameplay is tough, but it's addictive too. In fact, I think the Engine version is a tad more playable than the coin-op original!

What higher recommendation can I give?

JULIAN RIGNALL

PC ENGINE

▶ GRAPHICS	87%
▶ SOUND	82%
▶ VALUE	79%
▶ PLAYABILITY	90%
▶ **OVERALL**	**89%**



ME… MACH…

DRAGON SPIRIT



▶ PC Engine, Mail Order only

If you've ever wondered what it would be like being a dragon, flying over the landscape roasting everything in your path, wonder no longer. With Namcot's latest PC Engine conversion you can do just that.

Dragon Spirit adds a new twist to the vertically scrolling shoot 'em up genre with the player flying a dragon over enemy landscape. The enormous blue pyromaniac reptile is capable of spitting firey gobs at any flying enemy, and can also launch white-hot phlegm bombs to take out ground targets.

Plenty of power-ups are available, accessed by blowing up eggs on the ground and collecting the items that are released, or by blasting flashing baddies (oo-er). Up to three extra heads can be acquired for extra fire-power, and gathering red pods upgrades the dragon's armoury from gobs to missiles, and ultimately fiery breath, which is a very powerful



EAN
HINES







weapon.

Other features include shrink, earthquake, mega-flames, homing missiles, shields, extra lives, bonus points and skulls, which take away all power-ups (very annoying).

There are ten levels in all, each one very long and hazard-packed. Terrain includes ice, sea, volcanic lands, a deadly valley and deserts, and each level has a giant monster at its end which is destroyed to go onto the next landscape. Some of the monsters are brilliant, with giant spiders, snakes, dinosaurs and even a huge sprite-spitting flower!

Gameplay is very tough and challenging, but remains incredibly addictive as you battle up the landscape. The graphics are simply gorgeous, with plenty going on and not a flicker in sight — the giant monsters are particularly impressive, especially the huge flower. The sound is also superb, with a brilliant stereo soundtrack on each level and good spot effects.

Dragon Spirit is a superlative shoot 'em up — an essential addition to every PC Engine owner's software collection.

JULIAN RIGNALL

PC ENGINE

▶ GRAPHICS	89%
▶ SOUND	94%
▶ VALUE	88%
▶ PLAYABILITY	95%
▶ **OVERALL**	**94%**

VIGILANTE

▶ PC ENGINE, Mail order only

As if you needed any proof that the neighbourhood was going downhill, a gang of skinheads have kidnapped Madonna.

To recover his sweetheart, our Vij has to follow her captors' van throughout five of the seediest, horizontally-scrollingest areas of town, all of which swarm with street gangs. Vij is a meaty sort of bloke though, well-versed in martial arts, and he can leap, duck, punch and kick to beat all hell.

At the end of the first four levels are some pur-retty big arch-thugs, who include a pair of acrobatic pugilists and numerous fat, balding men, none of whom are called Garry Williams, surprisingly enough, but all of whom can land very heavy blows. The big (and I mean BIG) boss guards Madonna at the end of level five, and in the unlikely event that you manage to knock him down, Vij releases his girl and carries her off into the sunset.

Happy endings like this are all very well, but it's a pity Vigilante's is so easy to see. It's not that the game is easy, but it was probably a mistake to put in a credit system, allowing you to continue the game after you've lost your three lives. The temptation is just too much, so it doesn't take much practice to get Vij to the end of level five.

Having said that, *Vigilante* is still a flipping good game, even second time around. Anyone who has played the Irem coin-op will be hard pushed to spot any discrepancies in this conversion, because the graphics are spot on, perfectly defined and beautifully animated.

It's not top of my Engine software shopping list, but any beat 'em up fan should check out *Vigilante* without delay.

PAUL GLANCEY

PC ENGINE

▶ GRAPHICS:	87%
▶ SOUND:	80%
▶ VALUE:	74%
▶ PLAYABILITY:	81%
▶ **OVERALL:**	**80%**



MEAN MACHINES

GET YER PC ENGINES HERE

At long last the PC Engine is now available in Britain — although only through mail order outlets at present. The prices of software and Engines are varied at the moment, so we have decided to round up all dealers and give a comprehensive list of what they supply, and how much it costs — it's up to you which one you choose, but we do advise you to phone first and ask about the availability of stocks.

TELEGAMES

Telegames sell two versions of the Engine. The cheapest comes with a SCART adapter and runs on monitors (such as the Philips) or televisions with a SCART interface, and costs £199.95. If you want one that plugs straight into the TV, you'll have to pay £224.95. The software range is good, with 16 titles ranging from £27 to £35.

For the price list send an SAE to Telegames, Wigston, Leicester LE8 1TE or phone 0533 880445.

MICRO MEDIA

Another new company that deals exclusively with the PC Engine. They have large stocks of Engines — the SCART version costs £199.95 (don't forget that you need a monitor or TV with a SCART interface) and a TV version costs £224.95. The CD-ROM unit costs £450 (with interface). All Engine games are stocked, each costs £29.95.

For more details, write to Micro Media, The Moor Hall, Clee Downton, Shropshire. Don't forget to enclose an SAE. If you want to phone, ring 0584 75604.

PC ENGINE REVS UP

Some rather tasty looking titles are soon to be available on the PC Engine. *Rainbow Island* (Bubble Bobble II) looks very nice — it's a wacky platform game and looks just the same as the coin-op original. Also coming soon is *Denarius*, a conversion of Taito's vertically scrolling shoot 'em up, and a superb-looking beat 'em up in the mould of *Dragon Ninja* — we don't know what it's called 'cos it's Japanese . . .

The last two games are *Winning Shot*, a golf game from Data East, and *Son Son II*, a translation of the Taito coin-op. We've seen *Son Son II* and it looks brilliant; it's an arcade adventure of sorts, with the hero running, jumping and climbing around a multidirectionally scrolling landscape in search of his kidnapped friends. There should be a review next month — look out for it.

SHEKHANA

Shekhana mail order services is one of the oldest software suppliers around, with over a decade's experience in the computer trade. They stock fully converted PC Engines that run on British televisions for £220 — they'll also part exchange an NTSC PC Engine that won't work properly in the UK for a converted one. Ring for details. Shekhana also have PC Engine CD-ROMs for sale (a complete unit with Engine and games costs £500) and have 18 titles in stock (prices vary).

For mail order details send an SAE to SCS (C&VG) 655, Green Lanes, London N8 0QY.

You can also see and buy the Engine at Shekhana's shop at 221 Tottenham Court Road, London W1.

PC ENGINE SUPPLIES

A new company that was formed solely to import PC Engines. They sell fully converted Engines that run on British tellies for £195.00, as well as the CD-ROM player (£500), an Audio/Visual Booster (with monitor/hi-fi connections) for £30, an autofire joypad (£20) and five-player interface (£22). They stock all available PC Engine software, with prices ranging from £27 for R-Type to £40 for Space Harrier.

If you're interested, send an SAE to PES, 223B Waterloo Road, Cobridge, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs. ST6 2HS for a complete price list, or phone 0782 213993



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HARDWARE — Look out for the latest computer innovations available on the PC Engine such as a portable colour LCD screen. How about a CD Rom player capable of orchestral sound tracks and true voiceovers with previously unheard of storage capabilities. Imagine if it could double as a top of the range hi-fi compact disk player with amazing software drives facilities.



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COMPUTER +video GAMES

Next Month

Next month we have an all-formats review of System 3's new horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up, Dominator — brought to you by the same team that brought you the immensely successful Last Ninja games — as well as in-depth reviews of Vigilante, Zork Zero, Run the Gauntlet, Renegade III and Voyager from Ocean, and all the latest 8 and 16-bit games. Mean Machines has reviews of California Games, Time Soldiers and Vigilante on the Sega, as well as all the hottest PC Engine and Nintendo titles — and an in-depth look at the 16-bit Sega and its new range of games. On sale April 11 for £1.20. Don't miss it.

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Out To Lunch

Yo, ho, ho software and parrot on your shoulder jokes have been around about as long as Long John Silver himself. Now long John Minson talks to Federation Against Software Theft boss — Bob Hay — about the pirates that are about to walk the plank.



▲ *Compilations: a fairer way of building your games library.*

I've been keeping an eye on this guy for some time. He's the one they call 'Mr Big'. He knows all there is to know about program copying. He's been in the business of software piracy for years.

But Bob Hay isn't a pirate. Just the opposite, in fact. He's the software industry's gamekeeper, director and co-ordinator of FAST — the Federation Aginst Software Theft. The man who shouts, "You're knicked!" when Rambo, Robocop and Pacman kick in the door and arrest the young scallywags who've been ripping off their games.

Or maybe not . . . It's hard to imagine this soft spoken, former Chief Superintendent raising his voice at all. Still, after thirty one eventful years in the force, which included the Iranian Embassy Siege, the Grunwick picket lines and the Southall riots, it's a fair bet that Bob Hay can take care of himself when he needs to. Look into his steel grey eyes and you immediately recognise the authority of the experienced policeman.

That's what brought Bob to FAST when he retired from the Met. Back in 1984 the software industry realised it needed to protect its products from copying. People who would never think of half-inching a paperback from Smith's had no qualms about ripping off duplicate tapes and disks.

The law, proving once again that even if it's not an ass it's as slow as a mule, had failed to come to terms with the new technology. "What is a micro-computer?" learned judges asked. The problem was that when the copyright laws were drawn up STs and Amigas were mere science fiction. So the law needed a kick up the eighties.

Twelve months later the legislation had been updated, thanks to FAST. Further victories followed and its membership grew, so that now all the major games publishers, as well as many business software companies are members.

So how does FAST tackle the pirates? Like most good police work it depends on a little luck, a few inspired hunches, a lot of hard work and some solid detection. Take this recent history, hot from the files of Bob Hay. (Only the shoe sizes have been changed to protect the innocent).

"There was this guy advertising as a mail order software supplier. Now luckily there are still a lot of honest people out there, and one who'd received this stuff could clearly see that it was pirated, so he got in touch with the publisher, which passed it straight on to me."

So did Bob send round the Sweeney? Not quite. FAST is more Sherlock Holmes than Dirty Harry. "We traced him via his advertisements then made test purchases. Eventually we had more than enough to interest both the police and local trading standards authority."

When the raid finally came the pirate surrendered without a fight. "We could have entered by force, but we're not in that melodramatic world. I wouldn't flatter them. It's not that sophisticated a crime." In the case in question the accused came clean — probably the wisest move as FAST confiscated all his stock and business records as evidence!

Not all cases are so simple though. There's not been any sign of organised crime counterfeiting software since the mid-eighties, according to Bob, when a major forgery operation was busted. But there is an international network of pirates hacking through protection systems and selling the copies.

The pirates of the Spanish Main have their contemporary counterparts today. Then again, software prices in Spain were, until recently, exceptionally high, which is just the sort of climate that breeds piracy. But Bob Hay knows of copiers all around the world, many of whom escape scot free because local organisations refuse to tackle the situation.

More recently there's been the rise of the hacking crews, defiantly wearing their T-shirts around last year's PC Show. Bob Hay is dismissive of these program-busting poseurs.

"The closest comparison I can think of is the CB freaks. They gave themselves nicknames. They loved the sounds of their own voices. They craved attention and were desperate to create a macho image. But what happened to CB? It was an amusing phenomenon that came and went.

"You take away the image," Bob continues, "and there's only one adjective I'd use to describe them. They're pathetic. They don't build or create — they just wreck."

"They say they do it because it's there. It's the same thing that draws pec to climb Everest or trek to North Pole. They'd like tc us believe that's what th too, but I don't believe software's the final frontie.."

There is one thing Bob Hay does believe though. Piracy, if it's allowed to continue, will destroy the software industry. "It's like any high street store. They pass the losses from shop lifting onto the honest customers. Pirates grumble about the price of software, but they're driving it up. And it's the honest customer who suffers."

Warming to his theme, he describes the situation in Sweden, where piracy is rife. "If you allow piracy to go unchecked people don't bother to write software. There's no incentive to stay up all night knocking your brains out if there's no way of gettin a return on your investment."

But what's the real scale o the problem? Last year counterfeit software with a street value of £1.5 million was seized in Britain. That's £1.5 million which should have gone to programmers, publishers and, even if you don't give a damn about their losses, should have been ploughed back into new games.

With the law now firmly on his side, industry-wide support for FAST and new measures on the cards such as an international anti-piracy body, Bob Hay believes that he'll continue winning the battle against pirates. But does a little copying really matter that much?

"How would you feel if somebody was photocopying your articles and stopp from selling them?" he Which does sort of brir home.

According to Bob, it' battle to educate the peopie who support the pirates by buying their illegal copies, robbing the rightful owners of their share of the profits. Imagine some spotty oik stealing your dosh and see how you'd like it. Enough said.



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